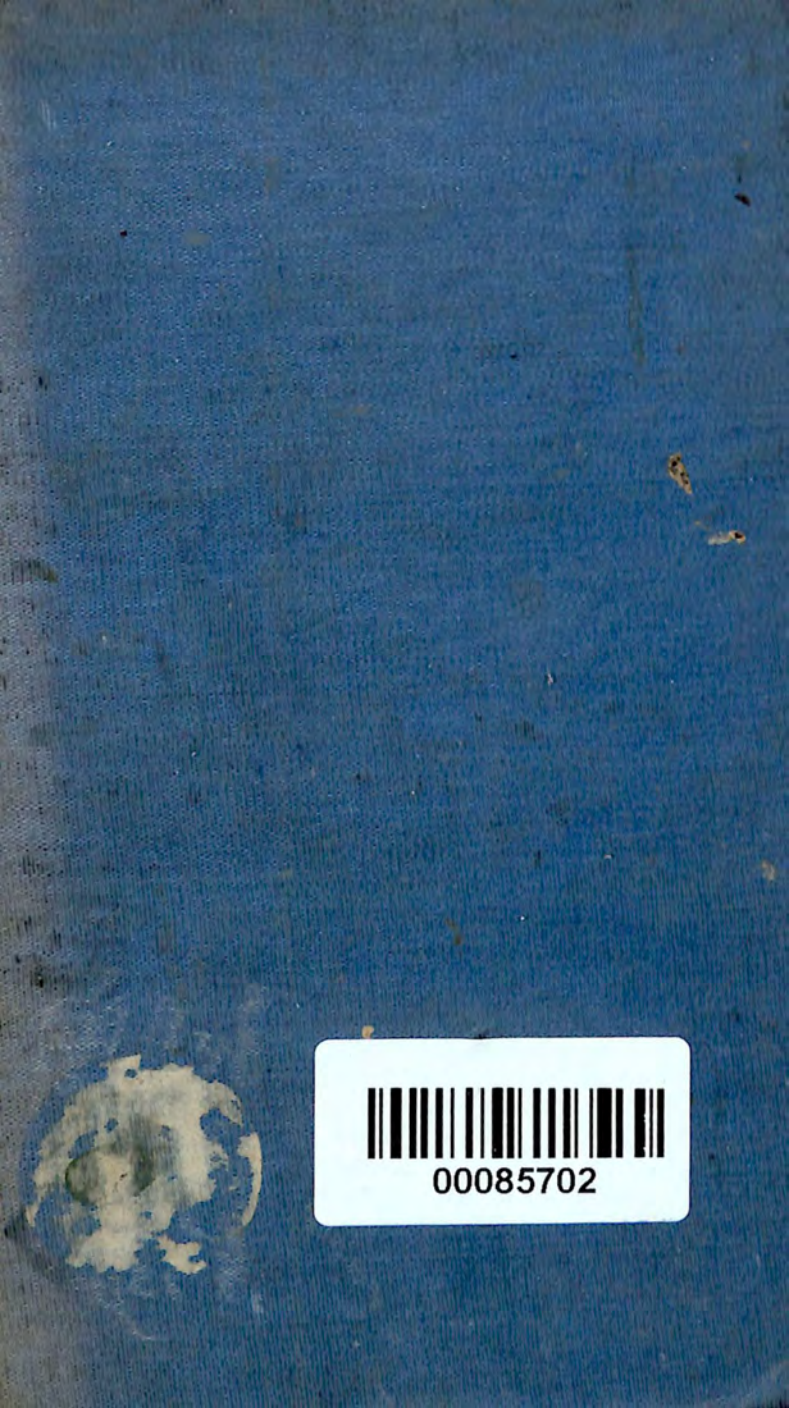
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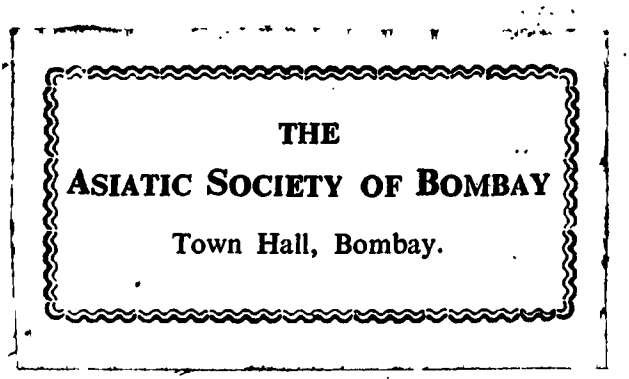

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THREE YEARS

IN

PERSIA;

WITH TRAVELLING ADVENTURES

IN

KOORDISTAN.

BY GEORGE FOWLER, ESQ.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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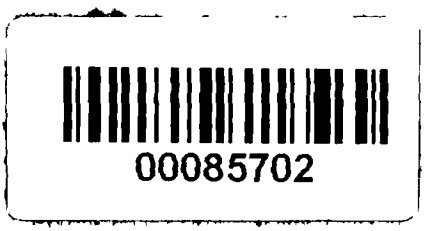

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PREFACE.

In these literary days, when there are nearly as many writers as readers, some apology might be deemed necessary for appearing in print; but, as Eastern subjects are generally deemed peculiarly interesting, and nothing having yet appeared of the land of "Iran" in the shape of the work now submitted to the reader, the author hopes he may be considered to have had sufficient grounds for venturing on the field of publication.

It is with extreme diffidence he has glanced at the political and commercial relations between Great Britain and Persia, since, in their present anomalous state, they are so difficult to define: he believes, however, the information on the subject

he has been enabled to obtain, will make that portion of his volumes worthy of attention.

The travelling incidents in Koordistan are from letters penned at the time to the author's friends in England. This he trusts will not be without its recommendation; it being usually admitted that "one line written on the spot is worth a thousand recollections."

Although the author makes no pretensions to any thing beyond slight sketches of Persia and its inhabitants, written during his various wanderings over that country, he is by no means indifferent to the public favour: indeed, his seeking it has, in Persian phraseology, caused "the nightingale of the pen to flutter around the rose-bud of expectation." He will only add, in words from the same source, "may its bounty increase, and its shadow never be less!"

LONDON, 1ST APRIL, 1841.

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REMINISCENCES

OF A THREE YEARS'

RESIDENCE IN PERSIA.

CHAPTER I.

THE "KHELAAT U PUSHAN."

It is generally about the end of May that the ceremony takes place of the prince arraying himself in the royal robe of honour, conferred upon him by his Majesty of Persia; and this, according to court etiquette, must be done publicly. Near all the different cities, buildings are purposely erected for this ceremony, called the "Khelaat u Pushan," or place for putting on the honorary dress with which the prince is invested by his sovereign. The public exhibition of it is intended

to show that he still basks in the Shah's favour—the countenance of the "King of Kings" continuing to shine upon him.

In a pretty sheltered spot, looking luxuriant amid the barren hills surrounding it, richly watered, and wooded with the poplar, the chinar, and other foliage, in the midst of a small lake, stands a tall, spiral belvidere, in the upper story of which the prince receives his numerous visitors. This is surrounded by about three acres of well shaven lawn, on which thousands of the "Azerbijanees" were squatted about in different groups, quietly awaiting the coming ceremonial. At the further end was pitched the royal tent, richly carpeted, and around it (forming a large enclosure) a treble row of the "Serboz," or infantry, was formed, which, with their huge white trousers, boots, and black caps, made not a bad line of about a thousand men.

The city of Tabreez poured its contents into this delightful valley; the day was propitious, the occasion inviting; so "mounting the stirrup of activity to get into the saddle of accomplishment," I soon arrived with my little party amidst the large assembly whom curiosity or custom had already convened.

Numerous "gholaums" were galloping about, giving directions, and arranging the coming ceremony, and a happy festivity seemed to pervade all classes, as I mixed amongst them, to see as much as I could of their character. There is a decent sobriety in Persian mobility that I have scarcely seen in any other; none of your noisy ebullitions of a village wake, as in my own country; none of the antic tricks of the mountebank, nor the low gambling of the thimble-rig; but the sober gravity of smoking, undisturbed by those spirituous potations which give so much animal recklessness to an English mob.

The troops were put through their evolutions, which I thought would not have disgraced a Hyde Park review; it was, in fact, English discipline engrafted on Persian subjects, through the indefatigable industry of their generalissimo, the late Major Hart.

In another tent, surrounded by numerous servants, was a group of very interesting looking "shah zadehs," or princes of different ages, from eighteen down to four years. There were about twenty of them altogether, richly dressed, and the sons of Abbas Meerza,—being but a small portion

however of his family. I could not but look upon them with a great deal of interest, when I reflected how precarious is the state of royalty in Persia; as on every accession to the throne, barbarous custom, or still more barbarous necessity, requires so many victims of the royal blood to be offered up, to quiet the fears or to establish the security of the newly raised sovereign; or, at any rate, that the eyes of the ill-fated striplings must be sacrificed.*

Whilst looking on at this interesting scene with my friend the "hakeem bashi," the penetrating eyes of the prince soon discovered him, and the "Isheagusi," or master of the ceremonies, was immediately sent down to summon him to the royal presence; and as he was marched up through the broad-staring ranks of the surrounding visitors,

* An English nobleman relates a curious illustration of this fact. On visiting one of the princes, then a young lad, he found him with his eyes shut, and feeling about with both his hands, like a blind person, for his kalleoon, which his servant was presenting to him. After a moment the gentleman asked, "What are you doing, prince? Is there any thing the matter with your eyes?" "Oh, no," said the boy, "nothing; but I am practising blindness. You know that when my father dies we shall all be put to death, or have our eyes put out, so I am trying how I shall be able to manage without them."

I felt thankful at not being subjected to a similar ordeal. There is nothing to me more positively distressing than "human ken"—I mean an aggregate of eyes, steadily fixed on their victim, and drinking in as it were his confusion. Congratulating myself on my escape from this publicity, I had retired to the cool grovy retreat, where, "sitting on my carpet of patience, I was smoking my pipe of expectation," when the appalling figure of the master of the ceremonies was making towards me, with "Sahib quj-ast"—where is the "Sahib?" (I really cannot translate this word, 'tis 'Master,' or 'Sir,' or whatever you please.) Resistance was impossible; the prince had ordered me into his presence; royal invitations amount to commands in this country, so I was marched through the wondering crowd, bidding defiance to my tortured feelings of *mauvaise honte*, which, however, I at last completely succeeded in conquering.

Bowing mandarin fashion in the royal presence, I was honoured with the usual compliments and enquiries—"Damaughist chauk ast," "how is your health?" "your place has long been empty," &c. I had to endure some ten minutes court etiquette, during which the prince asked me as to my travels,

how I liked Persia, and if my own country was to be compared to it; to which last question, when I recollected its mud regions, I assured his royal highness that it certainly was not. "Barikallah," said the prince, who took all my replies as complimentary.

Near the prince stood his brother, "Ali-nucky Meerza," looking down on the ground, not daring seemingly to look up without permission. Some other young princes were standing about, attired in splendid shawl dresses; and the courtiers, the "Kaimacan,"* with numerous Khans, &c. forming the prince's court, all were waiting in mute obei-

* Of the precariousness of the Persian court favour, the late "Kaimacan" was an instance, although one of his wives was of the royal "Kajars." Meerza Abool Cassim may be said to have ruled his late master, Abbas Meerza; and I heard him spoken of as the greatest enemy to Persia, he having betrayed the prince into the late precipitate war with Russia, by which, as my informant said, "his country had lost honour, territory, and money." The present Shah adopted him as his prime minister, or rather he found himself within his toils, and difficult to be extricated from them. The minister arrogated to himself so much power, as to become equally offensive to the Shah and the people. Murmurings, and at length loud complaints, reached the ears of his Majesty, who then determined "to finish him:" he gave orders for him to be strangled. The haughty minister was for a long time incredulous of his Majesty's commands; but he who had before played the monarch was now the victim of despotism, and he was

sance, to be perfumed with the liberality of their master's favour.

Prayers now began, so being dismissed from my audience, I ran off to see the interior of the belvidere, and had just reached the top of the stairs, when the gun fired, to announce that "the prince was coming." Down we bustled in most amusing confusion, and I hastened to run across the narrow bridge, which two persons can scarcely pass, when I met the prince in full majesty. I had just time to make my "salaam" as he passed me, and to notice his dress of honour, which was composed of white satin, richly studded with gold ornaments It was short, hanging down only to the knee, with half sleeves; around the neck was a tippet of glossy fur, and on his head he wore a scarlet turban of shawl, raised very high, of the shape and twice the height of the crown of a hat, and without ornaments. I understand that the use of jewels is limited to the sovereign. The bagpipe band struck up as the prince walked out of the belvedere towards the royal tent.

strangled at Tehran in 1835. That he deserved his death there seems to be no doubt, since it was a matter of congratulation with all the people; their rejoicings were likened to those of the "Ede y nu Rooz."

What a noble looking being was Abbas Meerza—his dignified, yet perfectly easy deportment, and his soul-speaking countenance, beaming with affability and greatness. Really, I never saw so splendid a human form, moulded seemingly as a rich specimen of nature's works.

His royal highness walked right royally to the tent prepared for him on this beautiful lawn, with so much majesty and dignity as to impress all beholders by his imposing appearance, as he took his place on the carpet in the oriental style. The novelty and splendour of the scene I shall never forget, when his many attendants and officers of the court, all with red turbans and superb dresses, came forward to offer their congratulations.

There was seated around the prince, at a respectful distance, the "shah zadehs," or young princes, already alluded to. They were placed in exact position according to their birth; for there is perhaps no country in the world where etiquette is more strictly attended to than in Persia. The princes were fine looking youths, and apparently worthy scions of the illustrious "Kajar" family. It was an interesting sight to see them sitting in

the most rigid posture of respect, not seemingly daring to look up without their father's permission.

The first ceremony was the advance of the courtiers, led up by degrees with slow and solemn step by the master of the ceremonies, two or three at a time, from the lower part of the green platform on which the troops were stationed; resting every twenty paces, to make their obeisance almost to the ground to their royal master, whom they dare not approach nearer than about ten yards. It appeared to me that the master of the ceremonies instructed them when to bow appropriately; at any rate, he set them the example. It was altogether a regular oriental scene, and gave me the best possible idea of court manners in this country.

The poet laureat was then led up, reading at a most respectful distance a congratulatory ode on the prince, and the honours of the day. It is his office "to make the nightingale of the pen to flutter about the new-blown rose of royalty;" but the high flown style of the complimentary, which is so copious in the Persian language, I will not attempt to convey, since his voice failed him as he gradually approached nearer, bowing to

the prince; for it so happened that the laureat was a very stout man, and his steaming exertion under a mid-day sun, caused his compliments often to die away on his lips, and become almost inaudible.

The laureat was a man of parts, and, as the Persians say, would require "rivers of ink to run through meadows of paper to create an easy navigation for his thoughts." What they were on this occasion I could not find out, for but few of them reached me. This poetic effusion lasted some twenty minutes. Then other courtiers approached, amongst whom I noticed the "Kaimacan," or grand vizier, himself a very respectable poet. All these were spouting orations, not one word of which could I understand.

Some military display then took place; the troops fired, and the prince returned to the belvidere. The whole ceremony lasted about an hour and a half. The dresses of the Khans are very rich: they wear the scarlet turban instead of the black lambskin cap. The Persian costume is particularly handsome. A Cachemere robe trimmed with silver was the prince's ordinary dress.

We were now scrambling for a retreat through the broken ranks of pedestrians and equestrians of all sorts. Amongst the latter was the "Nokareh kaneh," or the royal band, on camel-back. The Persians have no ear whatever for harmony;—the greater the noise, the better they are pleased. The band, with their dulcimers, cornets, and wind instruments of all sorts, began to discourse most discordant sounds; the camels became frightened, and off they ran, scattering the throng, and upsetting the musicians, to the infinite amusement of the bystanders.

I happened to be in the midst of the *melée* just as they were about to give some imposing effect by the flourish of trumpets, &c. The animals would stand it no longer; they seemed to have better ears for music than their masters; and, in their impatience to be gone, they nearly trod down some of the wondering crowd. I never witnessed a scene more irresistibly laughable.

The guns were fired from the backs of camels. These are termed "zambrooks," or camel swivels; and there is one advantage in this sort of moving battery, that the patient animal kneels to accommodate the gunner to his aim.

The custom of conferring dresses of honour in the East is of very ancient usage; and at the present time the richness of the "khelaat" indicates the favour of the sovereign. The ordinary dress consists of a "kaba," or long loose robe, sometimes with a shawl or girdle. We read of the magnificent "khelaat" presented by Cyrus to Syennedis, which, beside the dress, consisted of "a horse, with a golden bridle and a golden chain." It is stated, that on some such occasions, it was customary for the road to be strewed with roses, and watered, and glass vases filled with sugar were broken under the horses' feet. The treading upon sugar they deem an indication of prosperity, and the scattering of flowers was performed in honour of Alexander on his entry into Babylon.

Such, however, is Persian duplicity, and formerly practised by majesty, that a "khelaat" was sent to adorn a victim intended for spoliation or death. When clothed in the royal robe as "the man whom the king delighteth to honour," the assassin plunged the dagger of the royal ire or vengeance into his bosom. This belongs more to by-gone history.

The Serbozs* were formed into line, preparatory to the prince's return. I fell in with the train, and to see him on horseback was certainly a magnificent sight; so graceful was the simultaneous movement of both prince and horse, that he appeared to me to be of a perfectly distinct race from the general population.

The road was now crowded with the wondering auditory, and I being the only "Ferengee" amongst them, came in for my share of the public gaze. As they waited respectfully the prince's coming back, there were no noisy ebullitions, as in a British crowd; they rather crouched from the royal eye than greeted it. The sight was both pleasing and novel to me, since I had never seen so much of the "Azerbijanees" before. I think that at least thirty thousand of them must have lined the roads; and on the walls, the roofs, and every place where ingenuity could plant a head, there was to be seen the black cap. The beautiful ruins of the mosque "Sultan Kazan" had one entire covering of human beings. Great numbers of women, also, were peeping through their "chadres," but not a single nose

* "Serboz," in Persian, means one who stakes or plays away his head—no bad designation for a soldier.

was I permitted to see. Our bard's pithy description of a staring crowd comprises all that I would say, and with this I will close my day at the "Khelaat u Pushan:"—

> "Clambering the walls to see him, stalls, and bulks,
> Are smothered up, leads filled, and ridges horsed
> With variable complexions, all agreeing
> In earnestness to see him."

CHAPTER II.

THE "TAUJ U DOULUT."

It was in the month of August that I was wending my way through the narrow streets of Tehran, to obtain a fresher respiration outside the walls than I could find within them, when my course was suddenly arrested by a troop of "Faroshs," * with their long sticks, clearing the road, and their menacing shouts frightening every poor wight that stood before them, who ran away into the passages, and took refuge from the fury of the "courouk," or royal proclamation, which ordains, that when

* These "faroshs" are menial servants, pitching tents, sweeping carpets, &c. From the latter employ, they derive their name. They are generally numerous in all great men's establishments, and are the executors of his will, and of his orders for the bastinado, &c.

any of the Shahs harem leave the palace, no man shall appear in the streets, on pain of death, and woe be to him that does not in some way avoid the hurricane of the eunuchs' * wrath.

"What is it!" I exclaimed to Gul Mahmoud.

"The Tauj! the Tauj!" and with breathless haste he added, "kebarder," 'take care.' Immediately the "faroshs" were amongst us, when one of them turned me suddenly to the wall, to prevent my seeing the coming procession; another handled Gul Mahmoud severely for daring to keep his stand near me, whilst all were shouting and clearing the way of every living animal, man, and beast. I could compare it to nothing but the threatened coming of a wild bull, such was the general consternation.

Placed in this position, I yet ventured to turn around, for a peep at this wonderful "Tauj;" but

* The eunuchs run in every direction, and fire guns loaded with ball to drive people from the roads. They would make no scruple whatever at killing any one that may happen to be in the way. The peasants fly from their villages when the alarm is given; and if any one is surprised by the coming up of the procession, he throws himself flat on the ground or stands to a wall during its passage, deeming himself most fortunate if the eunuch is satisfied by his thus humbling himself.

buried in shawls and rich oriental embroidery, I could form no idea if it was a male or female that sat on the horse, since they both use the same saddles. A boy, richly habited, and his steed sumptuously caparisoned, preceded "The Crown of the State," for such is the title of the "Tauj u Doulut," or the king's principal wife. Then followed some ladies of the household, all in rich wrappers of crimson or gold colour, sparkling with Asiatic finery. In the midst of these came the "Tauj" herself, with many eunuchs surrounding her, whose vigilant eyes, lest any one should see even the wrapper which enveloped their fair charge, bespoke the trusty keepers of the harem.

The scene was so transient, I had only time to notice that the principal distinction of the "Tauj" from her followers consisted in the richness of her shawls, and the splendid housings of the horse bestridden by her. The train was brought up by a motley group of attendants, about a hundred altogether.

The "Tauj" was returning from the "Nagaristan" Palace, not far from the city, the favourite summer resort of his majesty and wives. Except on these extraordinary occasions, none of the royal

haremites are to be seen in the streets of Tehran; and such is the jealousy with which they are moved from place to place, that it would be positively fatal to any man to look upon the procession. The ladies are sometimes removed in a "takht revan." This is a machine on two poles, borne by mules before and behind. It is long enough to sit at length, and high enough for the comfort of reclining. The mules ought to be well trained, in order to step together, or the movement becomes very rough, as I have experienced.

The "Tauj u Doulut" was said to be the favourite wife of Futtee Ali Shah, and to manage the affairs of the "Andaroon," which are by no means unimportant, since large sums are annually expended for the females who inhabit it. The number of these royal prisoners it was difficult to ascertain. I have heard them estimated at a thousand. Not long before my arrival at Tehran, they had been materially thinned out; but whether from his majesty's caprice, or from sudden qualms of avarice touching the expense, was not known. Some of them were bestowed as wives on the khans, being the most gracious mark of royal favour.

I could learn but little of the history of the present "Tauj;" nothing whatever as to how she found her way to the royal favour. She was said to have been the daughter of an obscure "kiabab" cook at Sheerauz, who kept a public eating house for these dainties, and that her brother was then in the same profession. She was esteemed to be a woman of talent, and a woman of taste too, so far as English porter goes, of which she took her bottle daily—such, at least, was the "*on dit*" of Tehran.

The jealousy of the Persians that their females be not seen by any but their legitimate lords is remarkably strong. I have seen numerous instances. The harems are guarded by the black eunuchs, who can alone enter the apartments, whilst the white eunuchs keep the doors. The observance of this custom among the ancients of the East is first instanced in Rebecca covering herself with a veil at the approach of her affianced lord. The females themselves are equally jealous of being seen, as in the times of "Vashti, the queen, who refused to come at the king's commandment to show the people and the princes her beauty." The observance of this custom is thus

enforced in the 24th chapter of the Koran—"And speak unto the believing women, that they restrain their eyes, and preserve their modesty, and discover not their ornaments, except what necessarily appeareth thereof; and let them throw their veils over their bosoms, and not show their ornaments, unless to their husbands," &c.

They imagine it perfect pollution to the female for any strange man's eyes to light upon her. Of their extreme jealousy many instances came before me, both of the upper and lower orders. I was coming into Sulimania very early in the morning, having made a night travel of it from Tehran, when I met the "takht revan" of one of the royal wives, in which she was being conveyed to that city. The machine was so completely covered in, and enveloped by curtains and wrappers, as to render it impossible to see the person within, even were they not cowled and coiled in shawl. A troop of "faroshs," with numerous other attendants and eunuchs, were clearing the way with menacing aspect. "Bauleh!" cried out the eunuch. I was then so far off as to render it impossible to see any thing; but the road must be cleared, and I was obliged to go to an inconvenient distance, to avoid

seeing even the machine which contained the royal prisoner.*

What an absurdity does this appear to us! but unless the strictest attention be given by the "ferengee" stranger to this custom, his Persian travel might be much endangered. I was once riding around the walls of Tabreez, when suddenly I saw some horsemen galloping towards me. "Beru! beru!" said the "farosh;" I enquired why, since this was a public path. I must immediately get out of it, he said, as a daughter of the Shah and the "Kaimacan's" wife had taken a fancy to promenade a little on this road, which must be immediately cleared for her presence.

These eunuchs are most important officers of the royal establishments; their influence with the Shah or the Prince is often pre-eminent to that of the grand vizier himself; he forms the nucleus

* It were endless to narrate instances of Persian jealousy as regards female seclusion. A Khan with whom I was well acquainted, and who was lately married, had offered a large sum to her father for permission to see his bride elect. The offer was scoffed at; the seeing her would have been deemed a profanation; and who can tell but that it might have cancelled the marriage contract? The circumstance has sometimes happened in Persia, of a Laban deceiving a Jacob, who thought he had married "Rachael, and behold it was Leah!"

of all intrigues within and without the palace. From the unbounded sway which he exercises over the ladies of the harem, he becomes the terror and the courted of the fair prisoners. The ugliest stamp which nature can imprint forms one of the requisites for office; brutality, intrigue, and all the other dark shades of character, make him up a very Machiavel.

CHAPTER III.

THE "MESHEDEES."

The Meshedees are pilgrims, who having made a visit to the saint's shrine, "Imaum Reza," at Meshed, in Khorassan, are from thenceforth always thus styled—a sort of religious honour, of which the Persians are very tenacious. I had made a long march of it one day, when I met large parties of them on the "Khoflan Khu."

This mountainous district divides ancient Media from "Irak Adjemi." Some part of it bears the remains of a pavement, said to have been constructed by Abbas the Great, and there are further and more ancient proofs of antiquity on the summit of a rock—the ruins of a fortress, called "Virgin's

Fort." The story is, that Artaxerxes built this fort, where he imprisoned a princess of the blood royal; but from its having become the resort of robbers, it was reduced to its present fragments.

At the foot of the mountain winds a muddy stream, "the Kizzil' Ozzan," which runs into the Caspian. Its crumbling bridge bespeaks not only antiquity, but danger, and requires the utmost care to avoid the pits in it, the wear and tear of time and rough usage.*

This "kafilah" of pilgrims was headed by the Moolahs, and the train was composed of numerous devotees, including females, and what is more extraordinary, bearing with them the corpses of their deceased friends to be interred in this consecrated ground, which is by some Mahomedans deemed indispensable to their admittance into paradise.

* It was near this bridge that the murder of Major Brown took place some thirty years ago, as was then stated, by banditti. Persia was at that time in a comparatively barbarous state; great jealousy was felt, even by the Shah, at Europeans visiting the country. Our gallant countryman, well armed, and confiding in the strength of his attendants, although cautioned of the probable danger, embarked heedlessly on his journey. The attack was instantaneous; he fell, his servants dispersed, and some of the booty was subsequently traced at Tehran. No attempt was made to discover the murderers, and the poor victim was unrevenged.

These corpses were contained in long chests, something like gun cases, there being one slung on either side of the horse. On passing them the smell was most offensive.

The moolahs were chaunting their "kelemeh islam," or profession of the Mussolman faith, "God is God, there is but one God, Mahomet is the Prophet of God, and Ali the lieutenant of God." One of them I thought looked very hard at me, seeing a "Kaffir," or infidel, coming up the hill, and sung out more vociferously to the honour of the Prophet.

On coming into a narrow pass I found myself wedged in amongst the throng, as though enlisted in the pilgrimage as one of the followers of the profligate polygamist, who has done more to bind a world in his chains of darkness than any other permitted impostor. I soon, however, made hasty retreat from the ranks of "the dead burying their dead."

It is difficult to describe this motley assemblage of pilgrims, dead and living, under the banners of the prophet; for they bear his ensign floating over them, and exhibit a zeal unknown to the followers of the Messiah. This pilgrimage is much insisted

upon by all good Mahomedans. The tomb to which they resort at Meshed, of Imaum Reza, is said to have been established by Shah Abbas, who, alarmed at the wealth carried annually out of his dominions by the pilgrimage of his subjects to the "Hadj," or Mecca, sought to divert their offerings to a shrine in Persia. This shrine is held in such high respect by the true believers, that the merchant will sacrifice his wealth and the khan his rank to be thus deemed a holy devotee of the prophet.

To be a meshedee, or an "hadji," is, in fact, deemed a great honour. The latter title is to be obtained at Mecca only, and then the black cap is exchanged for the turban. They will sometimes take two years to perform this last pilgrimage, leaving their worldly pursuits, and sacrificing half their wealth, thus to propitiate the prophet. The Koran thus enjoins the pilgrimage:—"Verily, the first house appointed unto me to worship was that which is in Mecca, blessed and a direction to all creatures. Therein are manifest signs, the place where Abraham stood; and whoever entereth therein shall be safe; and it is a duty towards God, incumbent on those who are able to go

thither, to visit this house." At Mecca they show the stone, and pretend that there is on it a print of Abraham's foot. So respected is the house said to be, even by the birds and the beasts of the field, that the former never light upon it, and the latter, upon their approach, immediately lose their fierceness!

There is another class more holy than these, which are the "Syeeds," or descendants of the Prophet. They are a numerous class, far beyond any thing that Mahomet's family could have extended to, and are distinguished by a green turban. They are considered by good Moslems to be invested with inherent sanctity, and entitled to peculiar respect.

There are other shrines in Persia equally respected with that at Meshed. At Koom there is a mosque, and tomb of Fatima, the daughter of Imaum Reza, which was held in great sanctity by his late majesty. There is also the tomb of Sefi the First, and of Shah Abbas the Second; he is said to have expended annually an immense sum in ornamenting the tomb of Fatima. He covered the cupola with gold plates. The royal bounty was followed by that of his court and some of his

wives, who with jewellery and precious stones rendered it immensely rich. Koom was the favourite resort for the "bust," or sanctuary, and it is said that Abul Hassan Khan, twice ambassador to the court of St. James's, found protection here from the royal ire. "

I have not myself visited the tomb, but was told by those who had, that the body becomes not only food for worms but for rats, which abound here to such a degree, that they have scarcely time to make the deposit ere the man eater seizes the putrescence, threatening the living as well as the dead, the moment the body is lowered, uncoffined, into its last cell.

The use of coffins is almost unknown in Persia. The body is simply wrapped in a coarse striped cloth. Thus laid on the bier, without pall or other covering, it is hastily conveyed to its last home. The superstitious feeling in favour of interment on the sacred soil at Meshed is so great, that they will sometimes disinter bodies from other ground, where they had lain two or three years. I frequently met "kafilahs" of these corpses, which were generally announced by the most offensive smell.

I passed another of these saints' tombs, not far from Kishlock, which they called "Imaum Zadeh," and found here a most luxurious resting place in a very pretty "baula khaneh," surrounded by flowers and fruits. It was a large circular building, surmounted with a dome of exquisite workmanship, having some rough paintings on the walls within. The saint's grave was stoned over with very good masonry. I could learn nothing of his history; but they told me that the most profound veneration was entertained for him by the Persians. Some say that he was the twelfth and last Imaum according to the "schiahs," and was the legitimate successor of the Prophet; that he ascended to Heaven without having ceased to live, and that he is destined to reign at some future period over the whole world, and to destroy all Anti-Mahomedans. Others say that Imaum Rezza had been poisoned with some grapes, the poison having been mixed with them by order of Mamoon-al-Rasheed, of Koos in Khorasson; but so clouded is the history, that nothing can be vouched for.

Interment of the dead is very prompt in Persia. The "murdeshars," or washers of the dead, are

immediately employed; and sometimes in a few hours after death the body is consigned to its last home. I often met them at the gates of the city, preceded by the moolahs, and the passing stranger giving his shoulder to the load, so that there is no lack of bearers to take it to the grave, where the prayer called the "talchi" is pronounced by the moolah. The Persians have a superstitious idea that by performing this service they merit the approbation of the Prophet. They have been sometimes known to inter the living amongst the dead; or rather, it has been discovered, by soon after visiting the grave, that life had returned, the body having been found in a different position from that in which it was placed.

The grave-grounds are of the most miscellaneous description, generally in the immediate vicinity of the city, and exposed to men and quadrupeds treading over them with the utmost indecency. Small slabs, of rude workmanship, and ruder engraving, indicate here and there the quality or the name of the dust interred below. But in this particular the Turks are very superior to the Persians: their cypress-enclosed burying grounds, and rich gilded tombstones, bespeak

every respect for the memory of the departed dead.

It is an ordinary custom amongst the Persians to visit the graves of their departed friends, particularly on the Sabbath eve (Thursday). I often saw groups of people uttering the most doleful lamentations, and bedewing with their tears the dry sod which they surrounded. They imagine the dead capable of *hearing*, but not of *answering* their plaints.

During the devastating cholera of 1830, in Persia, it was impossible to inter the numerous dead. Nearly twenty-five thousand inhabitants of Tabreez alone fell victims to it. These dreadful scenes are thus described by an eye-witness:—"Terror was struck into the minds of the people. Many were taken ill through fear, and died; men, women, and children collected together in large companies, crying and beseeching God to turn away his judgments from them. This they did bare-headed, and without shoes, humbling themselves, they said, because they knew they were great sinners. The air resounded, day and night, with their cries; at length, all classes fled to the mountains, leaving the city quite deserted; the

bazaars were shut up, and not a person to be seen in the place. In October of this year, the cholera raged most furiously, and of the villages half the inhabitants had been swept away: the corn was left unreaped, the cattle were wandering without owners, and famine seemed to be the inevitable consequence of the pestilence. Interments could not take place; servants dropped at the thresholds of their masters. Evident proofs were given, during this visitation, that the disease was not infectious."*

Near the city gates is built up the "numaz jah," or place of prayer: it is merely a raised platform of brickwork, on which some of the Persians perform their daily devotions, and here the bodies are sometimes brought to be prayed over, previous to interment.

The Mahomedans are strongly impressed with the idea of guardian angels being appointed to record men's actions, both good and bad, that they may be exhibited at the last day; and thus

* I had the above from a doctor, who stated to me that, being visited by some cholera patients, one of them, whilst he was prescribing, died in his arms. He was similarly exposed many times without taking the disease.

speaks the 50th chapter of the Koran:—"When the two angels deputed to take account of man's behaviour take an account thereof, one sitting on the right hand, the other on the left, he uttereth not a word but there is a watcher with him ready to quote it, and the agony of death shall come in truth."

They have a tradition that the angel who notes a good man's actions has the command over him who notes the bad actions; that when he does a good action, the angel of the right hand records it; that when he commits a bad action, the angel on the right says to him on the left, "Forbear setting it down for seven hours; peradventure he may repent or ask pardon." This reminds me of Sterne's beautiful allusion to "the accusing spirit which flew up to Heaven's chancery with the oath, blushed as he gave it in, and the recording angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word, and blotted it out for ever."

At the "numaz jah," already spoken of, many of the "sheahs" perform their morning and evening devotions. This duty is performed five times a day by all good Mahomedans. The prayer of the daybreak is particularly insisted upon by

Mahomet, as at that time he says the night angels are charged to give place to the angels of the day. But public devotion is the general practice amongst these people wherever they may be. It matters not what interruptions may occur—the prostrations, the kneelings, kissing the ground, the rapid play of the lips—all goes on with a seeming fervency, peculiar to the followers of Mahomet. On the Sabbath eve the different gates have their Koran readers, proclaiming aloud the doctrines of the Prophet.

What an ostentatious display this seems to be of religious profession, and so different from *his* commands! "And thou when thou prayest enter into thy closet." I have always considered that religion, if it be merely external, is better than none at all. When shall we see the followers of the Messiah proclaiming him in the market-places or on the house-tops! Although he does not enjoin pilgrimages to Jerusalem, as the Mahomedans enjoin pilgrimages to Mecca, yet why are his services so imperfectly observed, or seemingly the last duty thought of, as in nothing to compete with Mahomedan zeal.

I was frequently attracted to the burying-

grounds by the novelty of these "grave lamentations." The women were apparently the principal mourners, and children have I seen in seeming agonies, whilst the young Moslem, occupied with the Koran, was reading aloud from its inspiring pages. I like these associations from the living to the dead, it reminds me of the idea of our great poet: -

——— "Each soul
That ever animated human clay
Now wakes, is on the wing."

CHAPTER IV.

THE EVENING SALAAM.

It is customary for the Persian monarchs to show themselves twice a-day to their subjects at a public audience, where they hold what may be termed a "court of common pleas," for redress of grievances, pronouncing judgment, &c., such as "off with his head"—"cut out his tongue," or some such other summary mandate, which is always as summarily executed. The sovereign is supposed to witness these executions, and during my stay at Tehran, a culprit was suspended by the legs from two poles, and literally cut in halves by the henchman in the royal presence.

This mode of punishment is common in Persia,

and it is called the "shekeh," and is performed by the chief executioner, a most important officer, and always near his majesty's person.

They sometimes adopt the ancient mode of executions, said to have been first tried upon "Bessus," the murderer of Darius—that of having two young trees brought together by main strength at their summits, and then fastened with cords. The culprit being brought out, and his legs tied with ropes at the top of the trees, the cords which fasten them together are then cut, and by the power and elasticity of their spring the body of the culprit is immediately torn asunder, and the different parts are left attached to each tree separately.*

The ceremony of the "salaam" was much more simple than I thought could comport with the dignity of the "cousin of the sun and moon." Nor were the people attracted to it very numerous. The raw-looking troops formed a large circle near the "Nagaristan," or palace of his majesty's summer

* Other modes of punishment in Persia savour equally of the barbarous ages. Scooping out the eyes is a very ancient practice. Mutilating the limbs, and boring the nose and tongue with an awl, are some of the signs of the royal displeasure; also blowing from the mouth of a mortar, beheading, and the bow-string.

residence, environed with a small park of artillery. Then the "Nokareh kaneh," or royal band—and such music! "enough to split the ears of the groundlings"—what with the drums, dulcimers, &c.; but the leading instruments were ram's horns, attached to long poles, through which the men "blew wind and cracked their cheeks," producing every imaginable discord—which, however, seemed the music of the spheres to the Persians.

Standing on the tip-toe of impatience, and looking round on this prospect of novelty, I had time to notice the sundry groups which were stationed within the "mujlis," or assembly, amongst whom were some of the "shah zadehs," or princes of the blood royal, the "hakeem bashi," or chief physician, the "ameen u doulut," or finance minister, Abul Hassan Khan, a regular Falstaff, who has been twice in England as ambassador from the court of Tehran, and is admirably sketched by Mr. Morier in his history of "Hadji Baba," whose extraordinary adventures, by the bye, are very descriptive of the precariousness of royal favour in Persia.

In the centre of the "mujlis" was placed a plain English chair, destined as the imperial seat of jus-

tice. This was the great centre of attraction, and as the different groups stood around it, they assumed the profoundest gravity, like a corps of mandarins waiting the imperial nod, "to nod again." There is a quiet bearing in the Persian mobility which I have never seen in any other—a sort of respectful terror, if I may so say, at the approach of majesty; they have a religious respect for their sovereigns, whom they call "Kebleh Alum," or asylum of the world. They are thus taught by Saadi, who says of him, "Even if all should be vice in thy slave, any vice approved of by the prince becomes a virtue; he who does not think with the sovereign washes his hand in his own blood." "If the king should say, in broad day it is night, it is necessary to exclaim immediately, behold the moon and stars." His subjects may be said, therefore, to live on the breath, and are dependent on the will, of "his most despotic majesty."

Some half hour passed subject to this oriental discipline, when, as by the wand of enchantment, the scene was changed by the slow and majestic approach of Futtee Ali Shah, and, by one simultaneous movement, every head was bowed with

a low and graceful inclination; the rams'-horns ceased their creaks, and an universal "hush" pervaded the assembly. Nor could it be otherwise: a frown over the imperial brows may denote destruction to some one within that assembly; a certain movement of the hand is the signal for death.

His Majesty, moreover, was on this occasion dressed up in smiles. I minutely regarded this "King of Kings;" and, to say truth, he was "every inch a king;" of taper stature, with a long flowing beard, worthy the Persian's oath; for they swear by the king's beard. His gait was right royally imposing; he strode the earth not with affected majesty, but with the innate dignity of the oriental metaphor—"a god! a god!" Simply habited, I saw nothing in the way of distinction, but that the handle of his Majesty's dagger sparkled with brilliants.

When the imperial clay was seated on the chair, then did "the canons bruit it to the heavens," which is the signal for the Khans, the ministers, and the beglerbegs "to mount the steed of acquiescence at the royal command, and putting their foot into the stirrup of submission, to proceed on the embassy of humility."

"Bechesm" is the general reply of these slaves to majesty's commands,—"my eyes are yours," which is true enough, for the king can order them to be brought him on a gold tray, if he sees fit; and this has formerly been done.

In breathless suspense the royal pleasure was now waited for, which was announced by "kaleoon-byor;" this the pipe-bearer presents on his knee, and the king, taking three whiffs of the odoriferous weed, returned it with the same ceremony.

The doctor was then summoned, and reverentially bowing at stated distances, was admitted to audience, some ten yards off, introduced by the "Isheagusi," or master of the ceremonies; for it is never permitted to approach nearer the royal person, not even for the issue of his own loins. Etiquette is extremely severe in Persia, from the monarch down to the "Jeloodar," or groom; the princes never sit in the king's presence, without his special commands so to do; nor sons with their fathers, nor younger brothers before their elders, until ordered by them.

The king is generally attended by his "gholaums," or slaves, a sort of body guard, many of whom accompanied him to the "salaam." They

always attend the Shah on horseback; they are likewise the messengers of the imperial will, or couriers bearing his firmans to distant provinces. He has about three thousand of them ready to mount the "stirrup of activity;" and it is deemed a great honour to bear the rank of a "Gholaum u Shah Padi Shah."*

A group of princes was then summoned, and amongst them I noticed Ali Shah,† the "haukim," or governor of Tehran: after being honoured with

* The original institution of these gholaums was somewhat like that of the Janissaries at Constantinople, and the Mamelukes of Egypt, being formed from the children of Christian parents taken in battle. In Persia they have never been so formidable as in the other countries.

† This Prince, who is called the "Zili Sultaun," is the brother of the late Abbas Meerza by the same mother. On the death of his father he proclaimed himself king, and played the monarch for thirty-five days, having plundered the treasury the first thing. He was at length seized and imprisoned when his present majesty advanced on Tehran, and gave in his submission by assisting at the coronation. This extraordinary clemency of the king was abused by the "Zili Sultaun," who escaped from his confinement in the citadel of Erdebil, during my last residence in Persia, with two other princes, to the Russian frontiers, seeking for aid to assert his rights again to the throne. He subsequently went to Egypt on the same errand to Mahomet Ali, whose advice to him seems to have dissipated the fumes of empire. He then set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca, whether to implore the Prophet's aid, or to expiate his sins, has not been stated.

a short conference, they resumed their station. Successively many others were brought up to audience, but whether chancellors or exchequer lords I could not find out. The whole affair lasted only half an hour, when his majesty re-strode with equal grace to the Nagaristan palace.

His most despotic majesty has been renowned for the clemency of his government, although, such is the abjectness of his subjects, that they say, "whether you slay, or whether you pardon, my head and face are on thy threshold."

His majesty was a very respectable poet; and the Persians are devoted to poetry. I copy from one of the poems of Hafiz, to evidence their style and inspiration, of which they say, "it shows the sublime and ardent inspiration of a soul impatient of its earthly prison for reunion with that fountain of life from which it originally flowed, and into which it will be finally absorbed."

"This earthly prison is not a cage worthy of a nightingale such as my soul, which longs for its native soil, the bowers of Paradise.

"I know not whence I am, nor whither I go. Alas! that my chief concern should be involved in such obscurity.

"How shall I contemplate that world, which is the abode of infinite purity, while thus entangled by an intimate union with matter.

"If my heart betray the fervour of desire, be not surprised—like musk it betrays its hiding place.

"Since my abode is in the presence of the virgins of Paradise, how can I frequent the banquet of revellers. . . . The desire which thus manifests itself by outward tokens was implanted in my heart by a heavenly houri, and even the power of wine is not able to remove it.

"I am adorned with gold and embroidery; but judge not by external appearances; I conceal under these splendid ornaments a fire which consumes me like a torch.

"Come then and remove from before him the existence of Hafiz, for in thy presence no one can hear from me that I am."

Their grand historian Ferdoosee was a poet; his "Shah Nameh," or History of Kings, is a poetic effusion of extraordinary genius, containing one hundred thousand lines, which it took him thirty years to accomplish, and is said to have been written by inspiration. He is called the Homer of Persia, for the narration of his battle scenes, for the purity of his style, and the elegance of his diction. His long and difficult name was Abul Cassem Munsuril Ferdoosee Hassan Ben Scharf. He wrote in the time of the Sultan Mahmoud, and was dissatisfied with the royal largess, so that he turned his eulogy into satire.

Saadi is a poet likewise in great estimation; but he is more grave and philosophic than the flowery

Hafiz, whose unbounded fancy was the particular trait of his genius. The rose and the nightingale are two of the particular subjects of the poet's inspiration, of which they thus speak:—"The nightingale if he sees the rose becomes intoxicated; he lets go from his hands the reins of prudence." The violet also comes in for the compliment of the muse.

"When the young rose in crimson gay
Expands his beauties to the day,
And foliage fresh her leafless boughs o'erspread,
In homage of his sovereign power,
Bright regent of each subject flower,
Low at her feet the violet bends her head."

"O Hafiz! thy delightful lay
That on the wild wind floats,
Resembles much, our poets say,
The nightingale's rich notes.
What wonder then thy music flows
In the sweet season of the rose."

Hafiz may be called the Shakspere of Persia. This poet lived in the time of Timour, and some of his odes are translated in our language by John Nott. They are considered by the Persians to be a masterpiece of elegance in the original. I copy the following from his epitaph. His tomb is of

white marble, in a small garden called Hafizeen, near Shiraz, and on the tablet are two of his odes very beautifully cut.

"It is but just that thou shouldst receive a tribute from all fair youth, since thou art the sovereign of all the beauties of the universe. Thy two piercing eyes have thrown Khata and Khoten into confusion. India and China pay homage to thy curled locks—thy graceful mouth gave the streams of life to Khezi—thy sugared lip renders the sweet reeds of Egypt contemptible."

The overweening vanity of Saadi was most conspicuous, which I derive from his epitaph, (said to have been written by himself) on his tomb, not far from Shiraz.

"O passenger, who walkest over my grave, think of the virtuous persons who have gone before me. What has Saadi to apprehend from being turned into dust? He was but earth when alive, he humbled himself to the ground; and, like the wind, he encompasseth the whole world; he will not continue dust long, for the winds will scatter him over the universe. Yet as long as the garden of science has bloomed, not a nightingale has warbled so sweetly in it. It would be strange if

such a nightingale should die and not a rose grow upon his grave."

I cannot find that the Persians have any predilections for literature beyond their taste for poetry, for which their rich language is so calculated. Not a printing press exists in Persia, and the only effort which I have heard of in this way, is a lithographic press established by Meerza Saulik at Tehran, where some partial impressions of the Koran had been struck off, and with which he had established a weekly journal of the ordinary events of that city.

But let us from the poetry of life to its dull realities—apologising for this digression.

His majesty was not a gross feeder. His meals were attended by the "Nauzir," or steward of the household, who always sees to the preparation of them, and is answerable for their being unmixed with any deletereous drugs. The China dishes, with silver covers, being placed on the tray, are sealed by the "Nauzir," and he accompanies them to the royal presence; being placed on the "sofra," which is of shawl, on the ground, he breaks the seal, and then his majesty dips his fingers in the dishes. Having ascertained their quality, he buries

his knuckles in the "chillou," or mountain of rice, of which he is very fond. Nothing must be served that requires carving, beyond pulling the limbs of a fowl with the fingers; for even majesty never deigns to use a spoon, fork, or plate.

At a respectful distance stands the "Hakeem bashee," or chief physician, to watch the royal feeding, and to prescribe an instant remedy should majesty choke himself, or eat any thing to disagree with him. The hour of dinner is between eight and nine. The laws of Mahomet proscribe wines of all sorts; but as they say nothing about English porter, it is said that his majesty sometimes indulged in this beverage. Sherbet forms their only regular drink, a not unpleasant mixture of sours and sweets, which is served up in China bowls, to be drunk with wooden ladles of excellent carved work.

It is a general custom with the kings of Persia to eat in solitary grandeur. The late Shah would sometimes have select portions of his family to breakfast with him, a dozen or so. As I have heard described by the bystander, they used to squat around him in the form of a crescent, of which he was the centre, and were all placed scrupulously according to rank.

Persian cookery is very choice, the "naring" or "pillau" being the royal dish of Persia, composed principally of rice, with a chicken in the middle, or some savoury cotelette. Great temperance generally prevails in Persian feeding; nature is merely sustained, not overloaded. The king would sometimes roll up a ball of rice, called a "lugmeh," in his hand, and put it into the mouth of his favourite, who would swallow it with much deferential greediness.

His majesty was said to have been an early riser. Nothing can be more difficult than to know the details where the king lives in such utter seclusion, but I have heard that his government in the "harem" partook of the strictest discipline. The chief eunuch is an officer of the greatest importance in the establishment, who, with his auxiliaries, exercises the most unbounded sway. The other officers are of the female sex. To preserve the peace of such a community, where more than twelve hundred were congregated together, with all their conflicting claims of pride and power, required no little stretch of authority. The ladies' toilet in Persia is no inconsiderable item in his majesty's expenditure; for an overweening vanity,

and an inordinate estimate of personal beauty, are characteristic of the Persians.

His majesty, so rich in his female treasures, had a most contemptuous opinion of other monarchs not similarly wealthy, particularly of the king of England, when informed by Sir John Malcolm that he had only one wife. "What, only one wife! — wallah!" Then, boasting of his own female establishment, how his majesty laughed! this was almost incredible to king and courtiers. "And he cannot say 'cut off his head,' when he likes, of any of his subjects?" To "his most despotic majesty" the thing seemed quite ridiculous!

At the morning salaam every individual may have access to the king, thus personally going to the fountain of justice, without treading the tortuous paths of courts of law. The king is always attended by the chief executioner, or "ferusha ghuzzub," literally "servant of anger and violence;" for a sudden spark of fiery indignation igniting the royal wrath, may call this officer immediately into action, to annihilate some of his subjects, who are "less than the dust in his presence."

CHAPTER V.

THE PERSIAN "HAKEEMS," ETC.

The lassitude of the Tehran climate in August (97 Farenheit, in the shade) induces disease, which sometimes engenders death; and a six weeks stretch on my mattress had prostrated my strength, and almost converted me into "food for worms;" but nature rallied, and the God of nature had decreed that I should not find a grave amongst the Moslems.

The table land on which Tehran is planted, subjects it to a sort of vertical exposure, from which one is almost tempted "to call on the rocks and mountains to cover one." The hot stifling air

rather diseases than refreshes the lungs, and the whole animal system falls prostrate before these noxious vapours. The principal inhabitants flock to the neighbouring villages at this season; and at a distance of three hours only, an extensive range of these villages, near the mountains of Shemiroun, offer delightfully cool retreats to the sicklied stranger.

At one of these villages, Kand, the British Elchee was encamped, whose courteous hospitality was so well known to all travellers. His Majesty went either to Camp or retired to the Nagaristan palace, accompanied by some of his wives and courtiers. The bazaars are then nearly the only districts occupied, and here the man of pelf would almost rather sink into the arms of plague than yield his money-getting occupation. But death stalked horribly around us in the city; scarcely a morning but the howl was heard, the frantic cries of the women bespoke boistrous but not permanent grief, and the doleful signal of the "muzzin," who announces from the roof of the mosque that another of Ali's followers had drunk of "the sherbet of eternity," the ear was constantly dinned with the trophies of the great

destroyer, who "daily eats his millions at a meal." *

New blood was at length engendered in my veins, and "anointed with the oil of resuscitation," I sprang into my saddle, escaping as it were from a pest-house. Once more I opened my lungs, when without the city walls, and breathed new vitality. As "a bird out of the snare of the fowler," so did I make my escape. I was never more joyous than when emerging from the gates of Tehran, and was buoyant beyond my strength. The evening was beautiful, as seated in the ruined "baula khaneh" of the caravansery at Sulimania, I enjoyed the surrounding scene of garden ground, abundant in melons and other fruit, productions which in this district are so rich and flourishing. This abundance, arising from irrigation, is almost peculiar to Persia, the grateful soil the moment it is watered springs into bloom. Scratch the earth, drop the seed into it, and fruit soon follows.

Here I imprudently indulged in my favourite

* There are professional mourners to be hired in Persia, who by wailing and weeping over the dead, are thus supposed to pay respect to their memory. I identify many of the Persian customs with those spoken of in the Bible. Thus, "Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets."

musk melon; and dire were the consequences which followed. At Kasvine, the third stage, I was more than thrown back into my former physical debility; those gaunt-eyed monsters, ague and fever, soon made their approach; the journey fatigues, added to my fruit intemperance, produced a second edition of my Tehran sufferings.

What was to be done? to be laid up in a Persian caravansery, where the only accommodation was a brick cell, twelve feet by eight, in a state of complete nudity. How my weary bones ached, as stretched on my mattress I sought every possible reclinable position amidst the inquietudes of diarrhœa.

This is a disease which, though not peculiar to, is prevalent in this climate. I have no medical knowledge on the subject, but it appears to me to be an intestinal rebellion against even the necessaries of life.

To proceed was impossible; so I sent to implore the aid of the Mahomedan doctor, "Meerza Aboo Thaloub," the most renowned "hakeem" of the place. At six o'clock the next morning, a long bearded respectable looking gentleman walked into my cell, cautiously keeping its extreme dis-

tance, to avoid contact. As to feeling my pulse, that was quite out of the question. He was a Mahomedan of the old school, some of whom would as soon cure a dog as a Christian.* But the "meerza" had compassion on me, and although I much doubted his skill, yet his kind manner and probing enquiries as to my symptoms, implanted within me a certain confidence, which goes far towards a cure. He prohibited me from any and every provision which he did not himself send me. "Not even water," said he, "will I allow you, and I will cure you in three days." "Inshallah," said I, "and may your shadow never be less."

The good doctor prepared my food and my drink, and I recollect with what earnestness I looked forward three times a day to the arrival of my mess of pottage (which might have been poison for aught I could tell), and if the Hadji who brought it was five minutes too late, I became angry and impatient, and it was most amusing to see the gravity with which he placed the bowl at my feet, retiring backwards and waiting until I had swal-

* By the Persian code of religious laws called the "Jumah Abassi," they are very particular in their intercourse with "Kaffirs," or infidels. They deem their touch to be pollution, too deeply so to be eradicated by any external process.

lowed the contents, looking, as I sometimes imagined, as if grudging the feeding of a Christian dog.

I must confess that I never did like Hadji as well as his master; but I won upon him by degrees. Hastily swallowing my flummery, I would sometimes ask for a second supply. "Marshallah barikallah," said he; but I never could bribe him.

My drink appeared to be some decoction of herbs, and my food was wheaten flummery seemingly. What were the secrets of the doctor's art I know not; suffice it, that he either cured or starved the disease, and marvellous as it seemed to myself, in ten days I was restored almost to my usual strength.

How to pay the Meerza without offending him was now the difficulty. On his last visit he pronounced me convalescent, and allowed me to resume my journey. I poured out my "zhamets," "kali zhamets," and did all I could to express how much trouble I had given him. "Not at all," said he, "I am your slave, and all I have is yours;" and he took leave of me with the "Khoda hafiz shuma,"—may God protect you.

Perfectly overwhelmed with both speech and

kindness, I felt quite oppressed with obligation. But the Persians soon remove this nightmare from you. He had hinted to my attendant what would be agreeable to him in the way of "peishcush," or present. I was more than happy to get out of his debt; though I found it cost me more than would a London physician. Nor did I forget Hadji, whose eyes glistened as he turned over my coins, thanking me with his "Alham dulillah!" praise be to God!

Such was "Meerza Aboo Thaloub," the "hakeem bashi," or chief physician to the "rooknah doulut," or prop of the state, the prince governor of Kasvine. Hippocrates has never reigned in Persia, or if he has, his family have wofully degenerated. Description fails in speaking of medical ignorance, and the natives have great respect for any talent in this way. The Persians attribute all sickness to two causes;—the excess of heat and cold. Thus, if the patient suffers from the former, they bleed him; and for the latter they give cathartics. They will have it that every "ferengee" must be a doctor. Thus *I*, who scarcely know a bolus from a plaster, was often called upon to prescribe for

the fair sex. Except bleeding a man once by giving him a knock on the head, when the nose gave up a copious stream, I do not recollect being ever called upon by the other sex.

At Tehran numerous veiled invalids came to my door with "Nakoosh my shavam sahib," I am ill. I never could decline the necessary enquiries as to their maladies, &c., which were principally from fruit repletions,* and always said I never could prescribe without seeing the face. This was astounding to many of them; they indignantly rejected my conditions, and walked away. Others did by degrees open their "chadre," or veil, and it was amusing with what caution I was permitted first to see the mouth, then the eyes, they looking askance at me, laughing at the same time at their own shamefacedness. I had thus many a peep at a dark black eye, which otherwise to me would have remained obscured.

Sangrado like, I invariably ordered bleeding and hot water, and many a "zhamet" was I greeted with as the skilful "ferengee" doctor. I

* It is astonishing the quantity of fruit and sweetmeats with which these people gorge themselves.

would advise every traveller coming to Persia, to bring with him a box of pills and a lancet. These are the best travel passports.

As to surgery in Persia I should say there is no such thing. Their Mahomedan prejudices will not admit of dissection. The barbers may be deemed the only operators in such cases as bleeding, tongue cutting, &c. The great principle on which they act is, that the disease must be cured by a remedy of an opposite nature: thus for the heartburn, they will heap a quantity of snow on the breast of the patient.

Sir John Malcolm relates a curious instance of their cure for blindness, which he himself experienced.—"They filled a large vessel full of snow, I was desired to place my face near it, a red-hot stone was then thrown into the vessel, and the sudden dissolution of the snow caused a great perspiration, which was increased at the same time by a cloak being pulled over my head. The remedy, though very disagreeable, proved efficacious, and my sight was completely restored. This was imparted by the lady of a chief, in whose house I was a guest."

When they fail in their remedies, the "hakeem"

resorts to their favourite doctrine of fatalism. He says, "when it is decided by God that a man is to die, no human aid can be of avail." For the ague, which is a common complaint in Persia, and the most inveterate, of which I can bear witness, they beat the patient most unmercifully, in which treatment they say they generally succeed. I did not submit to this process during the many months of my intermitting visitor. Precisely at noon every other day the attack came on; it was preceded by a numbness of the extremities, and then the shivering, during which I could no longer keep my saddle. I was rather inconvenienced by this happening on my journey. Immediately my carpet was laid on the ground, I was wrapped up in horse cloths and cloaks, any thing that offered to keep warmth in me, and this under a tropical sun. Some water was immediately heated, and partaking of which, and laying thus for about an hour, was then able to resume my journey. How often have I kept the people waiting for me. "Sahib nakoosh ast" was the signal for stopping during the merciless attack of quartan ague. It was at length conquered by quinine.

The "hakeem bashi's" visits to the "harem

kanch" were sometimes of the most amusing description, as described to me by himself. In the long line of apartments, the ladies laying on their mats, but well screened over, were waiting the doctor's approach, with their various rheums and catarrhs, all depending upon him to get rid of their grievances. This implicit confidence in the skill of the doctor helps very much towards the cure, and is universally entertained in Persia. Accompanied by the chief eunuch, with numerous attendants guarding the way, the doctor stalks cautiously in, and nothing meets his eye but a series of hands, poked out from under the screen, and covered each with a gauze glove; for his touch merely upon the clay beneath would be deemed pollution but for this precaution. Then the titterings and laughings, the sobbings and sighings, many of the ladies feigning illness just to have a sight of the doctor, equally amused with himself at the passing scene. Meantime order is kept by the discipline of the eunuchs, which is sometimes very severe.

Some cases were bad, others frivolous. The doctor told me, that in one case he said he must see the patient before he could prescribe; but the

eunuch declared "mimkun nist sahib," it is impossible; entreaty and remonstrance was in vain, he would send her to "Jehannum" first. The next day on enquiry the reply was, "moord ast," she was dead. Thus was human life sacrificed to this bigotted national custom.

But what is the loss of a wife to the Prince of Persia! there is no chance of his becoming a widower, the meaning of the term is unknown in that country.

In former times the astrologers were often the only physicians, and they sought their remedies amongst the stars. But it so happened, that in one instance of a severe wound, the Shah grew worse under these celestial prescriptions. "Bejan Shah," "by the soul of the King!" said he, "unless you instantly cure me of my disorder, I will have you cut up into mince meat." The doctor, alarmed at his peril, suddenly declared that the hot brains of a man, if immediately applied, would prove efficacious. At that instant a glolaum came in with some pressing intelligence, entreating permission to rub his forehead at the Shah's threshold. "Knock him down," said the King, "and apply the remedy." The poor wretch was prostrated

and beheaded; the skull was emptied of its contents, and the hot brains applied to the King's wound—with what success the historian does not state.

I was once wending my way to Tehran from the "Takht Kajar," a country palace, three furseks off, when I met a long procession of "faroshs," headed by the chief eunuch, who was guarding a member of the royal harem to the palace. As usual they cried out "bauleh," and I was obliged to diverge from the path to avoid seeing even the shawl which enveloped the fair haremite. The sight of a "ferengee" stranger always excites attention, where it is only a few years since they have been tolerated at all. Having passed on at a most respectful distance, one of the faroshs was sent back with the enquiry if I was a "hakeem." Had I been bold enough to have answered in the affirmative I might have had the privilege, not only of seeing the fair invalid, but of counting the throbbing pulsations through the gauze glove, the lady halted, but I too modestly passed on, noticing only her unseemly gait at being mounted on two stirrups instead of one.

The late Shah was very particular respecting

his medicines; there was one purposely prepared for the "King of Kings," the principal ingredient of which was composed of "*pearls*;" these costly productions were pulverised, and infused. The "hakeem," my informant, did not tell me further respecting it, or of its object or result, but that such was the favourite draft of the King; nor did I hear that this medicine was protected by patent, certainly not likely to come into general use.

But one must be a "hakeem" in this country whether or no. I was once called on to a patient who had long been ill. He had been taking a quantity of medicine, he said, but grew worse. I asked what he had taken? "Davau kali kourdam sahib," I have eaten a quantity of pills. "Pills!" I said, "where do you get pills in this country? has Morison made his way into Persia!" "We pick them up at the door," said he, "they are chicken's pills." He had, in fact, been swallowing a quantity of fowl's dung, which it cost me all my skill to eject. I did so, and the man was grateful with his "alhamdulillah," praise be to God.

CHAPTER VI.

ROYAL FAVOUR IN PERSIA.

THE precariousness of court favour was strongly evinced during my stay at Tehran, in the temporary disgrace of "Zhorab Khan," a great favourite of his Majesty. "Zhorab Khan" was formerly a Georgian slave, but was raised by degrees to the high rank of Chief of the Andaroon, or manager of the harem department—no trifling undertaking this in the royal establishment.

Much of the duplicity and meanness of the Persian character may be attributed to that system of intrigue by which greatness is attained and rank supported. The slave imbibes with his mother's milk cunning, treachery, and all the evil seeds of

moral degeneracy; and there can be no nobility of nature under such circumstances.

This Khan, of whom I have just spoken, had reached the pinnacle of greatness; but having climbed the steep ascent by all those tortuous means so peculiar to the Persian character, the rank seeds of his birth sprang up in all sorts of tyranny, oppression, and cruelty. He was haughty, overbearing, even to his superiors, and to a degree that they would no longer submit to. Basking in the sunshine of royal favour, and decorated with the highest honours, he one day committed a gross insult on the Prince "Ali Shah," who called aloud for revenge. This clamour reached the ear of majesty, and nothing would pacify the Prince but the immediate disgrace of the favourite. A bastinado was accordingly ordered, and eight hundred sticks awarded. The once imperious Khan was prostrated at the feet of those "faroshs," who yesterday trembled in his presence, and he underwent the pain and indignity of the meanest culprit.

But the Shah's clemency melted towards him, even during his sufferings; and on the following day, as if in compensation for what he had undergone, the King clothed him in his own royal robe,

girded him with his imperial girdle, and raised him to a higher pinnacle of greatness than ever, again proclaiming, "This is the man whom the King delighteth to honour." The admiring audience again bowed down before him;—no stain nor feeling of disgrace marked the royal slave; his breath of yesterday was rank with dishonour, his breath of to-day is perfumed with the monarch's favour, and the hissing of scoffers was converted to the shouts of sycophants.

This was by no means a solitary instance of the precariousness of the royal favour. A Khan, high in rank in the Shah's household, and who had drunk deeply of the imperial liberality, was disgraced by some want of punctuality to his duties. He was stripped almost to the skin, mounted on a donkey, and, tail in hand, was thus paraded around the town to the wondering multitude. The next day he quietly resumed his duties, and was as unconscious of disgrace as the "faroshs" who conducted him.

Many instances may be adduced of his Majesty's sportive use of power, if I may so say. One of them I will mention in the history of "Abul Hassan Khan," twice ambassador at the court of St. James's,

and still remembered in some of the high circles of London society, whose amusing letter, written on his return to Persia—a sort of reminiscence of his visit to London—has I believe been printed. He was the nephew of "Hadji Ibrahim Khan," the celebrated minister of "Agha Mahomed Shah," and of his successor the late "Futtee Ali Shah." The minister having fallen into disgrace with the King, the royal displeasure generally follows those of his household. This is so common to the oriental court, that the victim is hurled from the pinnacle of grandeur, with all his family and friends, to the lowest depths of debasement and adversity.

Amidst the whirlwind of this fury, "Abul Hassan" was thrown into prison, stripped of all his dignities, and was subsequently driven to take sanctuary in the mausoleum at "Koom," always held sacred even against the despotism of the King. Escaping from thence, he travelled to Mecca and to Calcutta, having some introduction to the Governor-general of India. There he spent three years in visiting the oriental clime, having acquired the different languages, Arabic, Turkish, Hindoostanee, and English in a slight degree. Having learnt that the King of Persia had pardoned him, he returned to

his native country, where he was most graciously received by his Majesty. His "face had been whitened," and he now basked in the sunshine of the royal favour.

Such are the varied fortunes of the sons of Iran; yesterday the "felek" or bastinado, to-day the "khelaat," or dress of honour; nay, I was told that the rope was once around his neck, ten thousand tomauns was bid for his head, and that it was bought in at that price. Such was the *on dit* of Tehran, but I must confess that I am a little sceptical on this part of his history.

His Majesty afterwards appointed him ambassador extraordinary to the court of St. James's, and in 1809 he accompanied Mr. Morier in that capacity to London. Their adventures are ludicrously sketched in "Hadji Baba in London."

On his return, his first audience with the King, as described to me, was very amusing. "My eyes are enlightened at seeing you," said the King, "your place has long been empty, your face is whitened, and your consequence increased." "May your condescension never be less," said the Khan, seeking to rub his forehead at the gate of almighty splendour. "The firmament possesses but one

sun, the world but one king, your slave is less than the least; what lamp can shine in the presence of the sun?" but compliments were poor feeding for the King; his first thought was about the "Pescush," or presents; what was the weal or woe of his Majesty's empire compared to this! "Bechesm my eyes as yours," said the Khan. The presents were laid at the King's feet. Again and again the Khan swore he had no more, "be rysh y Shah," by the King's beard, still there were others to be found. The Persian game of duplicity thus kept up between the Shah and the Khan was at length won by the former, and the Khan, nearly ruined, was turned adrift to recruit his finances, by the practice of his tyranny over those whom fortune had placed in his way. The King subsequently raised him to the dignity of Khan, and conferred upon him the first class of the order of the "Lion and Sun."

The King appointed him a second time on a similar mission to England; and it is related, that, in order to indemnify himself for the royal spoliations of the last journey, the ambassador returned well charged with merchandize, taking advantage of the King's name to pass them through Turkey

free of duties, and to levy for beasts of burthen in his own country, under the "sadir," or royal order for passing on his Majesty's effects free of expense. The wily Khan was prepared with numerous presents to lay at the feet of "the King of Kings," remembering his Majesty's greediness on the last occasion; but it so happened he had heard of the ambassador's loads of merchandise which were making their way free of "gumrook," or duty, and travelling as "presents on the behalf of the King," and had determined to appropriate them all to himself. He chose to be absent from Tehran when the ambassador approached that city, and commanded that he should join him immediately on his arrival, and secretly gave orders to the gholaums that the whole of the loads travelling as presents for the King should be housed in the royal stores; so, whilst the ambassador was basking in the sunshine of royal favour, his merchandise and presents underwent royal sequestration. Not a word could be said, as the Khan never dared claim any of his effects.

Thus fraud upon fraud was practised by the ambassador and his royal master. Persian duplicity outreached by Persian *finesse*. The King was

too much for the Khan, and this royal *ruse* was the standing jest of the Shah and his courtiers.

In 1813 "Abul Hassan Khan" was sent to "Gulistan," to conclude a peace with the plenipotentiaries from Russia, the undefined terms of which led to the late war between the two countries. The following year he went as ambassador extraordinary to the court of St. Petersburgh, where he resided some time, and returned with the Russian ambassador to Tehran. His Majesty was now more liberal to him, having, it is said, presented him with an ode to his praise, of his own composing, and also gave him his portrait set in diamonds.

The Khan wrote a narrative of his travels, to which the King gave the title of the "Hairet Nameh," or the "Book of Wonders," and well deserving his Majesty's title given it.

When I saw the hurly burly Khan at the "Evening Salaam" I was much struck with his corpulent change since I first saw him in England—he had become a second Falstaff. I learnt that he continues to receive an annuity from the English government, for which he betrays their interests in every possible way, and is the avowed enemy of the country. He was but little respected by the

Shah or the courtiers; his meanness was notorious, and he was proverbially false. Of the former, an instance came before me; and in proof of the latter, no one would trust him. Even for a Persian he was spoken of with contempt and disgust. He has now attained seventy-five years of age, unloved, unrespected, and will die unregretted.

The order of the "Lion and Sun," to which I have alluded as having been conferred on Abul Hassan Khan, is the only order of knighthood known in Persia. It was very anciently the royal insignia of the land of Iran, and is supposed to have been adopted as a trophy of victory. The coins more than six hundred years ago bear Sol's figure in the constellation of Leo, and the lion couchant. Their banners are embroidered with it, the standard being surmounted with the hand of Ali. Of this order there are three classes; the first is thought but little of, and is rendered very cheap by the low grade of the recipients; the second is respectable; the third is most eagerly sought after by khans, courtiers, and foreign ambassadors. All the British envoys to the court of Tehran have been thus honoured.

Gold and silver medals are sometimes given in

Persia to those who have distinguished themselves; but generally the royal firmaun consists only of a large sheet of vellum, bedizened with gold letters, emblazoned with lions and suns of all climes, birds and flowers very tastefully arranged, and most exquisitely written, from one of which I obtained the following copy. The person to whom this gracious favour of "the King of Kings" is addressed, raises it to his forehead, and then it is read aloud in the most respectful silence, all standing until the contents are finished. I am not aware that any precise terms of the royal firmaun apply generally, since so much must depend on the fertile genius of the Meerza who draws it up, on the quantity of "chum y chum," or flattery that he means to throw in, and on the distinguished character of the recipient.

Royal Firmaun conferring the Order of the "Lion and Sun."

"In the name of the Holy God! (In the seal there is written "Power of Providence;" the seal of the state of this century, in the reign of Futtee Ali Shah.)—The state resembles the divine nature; it orders as follows:—

"From the day that the Architect of Providence made visible the position and the firm ground of the state, and finished with a profound sketch the plan of the house for the state upon the chart of his will, and that his firmness had raised into infinity the first of the straight pillars, while he fixed the rule of our eternal

happiness, and drew also the immeasurable lines of his consistency, by sending down the rays of his almighty power, appeared in great splendour. Now our direct intention and will is, and we have in the centre of our well-inclined heart determined that he who stays under the shade of this eternal state, and who with persevering exertion ascends the steps of zeal in this our state, shall be promoted to further honours, and be dignified by the grant of an act of our gracious benevolence. From the motion of our sovereign grace, we do convey to him our farther honourable distinction, that the most high titled, high sounding, the most illustrious from his station, the most wise, the constant, the all penetrating, the brave, the confident, arrived at our just court by particular desire, the high praised, the high standing, the wise, the particularly wise selection of illustrious Christendom, who, like a circle in the service of both high states, holds the head of obedience on the earth of submission—we will to distinguish him with greater honour, and confer upon him the order of the 'Lion and Sun,' with diamonds, which insignia distinguish faithful servants in Persia, in order that he may diligently apply himself to the service of both states, and manifest still greater zeal in cementing their friendly agreement.

"It is hereby ordered that the high praised, esteemed, and happy journalists of my blessed chancery do register and acknowledge the grant of this order. Written in the month Hegira."

Undersigned by seven or eight ministers.

The only titles in Persia are Khāns and Meerzas. The former is not hereditary; the latter, if following the name, means *Prince*, as "Abbas Meerza;" if preceding the name, as "Meerza Abbas," it means a writer or secretary. The *surname* is not used in Persia.

CHAPTER VII.

THE "BAGY SEFFRE."

THIS "Garden of Delight," is situated about one "fursek," or an hour from Tabreez; it was the once favourite residence of Abbas Meerza, and is certainly the most respectable thing of the kind I have seen in Persia. The sort of mineral ground which we go over to reach this country palace, is denuded of any thing like vegetation; it was vomited up as it were in hasty confusion during a tremendous earthquake in 1559, when half of the city of Tabreez was engulfed. The earth yawned; mosques, bazaars, and people were hurried into one grave; and the ruined monuments

remain a memorial of the catastrophe. That of Sultan Kazan mosque is the finest ruin.

Half-buried columns, and mounds of rubbish, extend nearly three miles around the modern city. Only a fragment remains of the mosque Mesj-Ali, which stands at the corner of the ark or citadel, bearing a few coloured tiles, and Koran inscriptions, to witness to its former splendour. This, which is now the boundary, was once the centre of the great city, and further remains of streets and houses are to be traced in many directions.

But the most remarkable remains are immense blocks of black granite, some of them having rams' heads and sphynxs, and other hieroglyphics carved on them; others, quite flat, bear long inscriptions. These blocks lay about in the utmost confusion, and half buried in the ground, as they were left by the earthquake; for nothing seems to have been done to level the surface in the immediate neighbourhood of Tabreez since this awful calamity. I have been assured that these blocks of granite bear date long previous to the Mahomedan era; sure I am that their inscriptions would puzzle even an Oldbuck himself.

There is no country perhaps where earthquakes are more frequent than in Persia. In the hot seasons the shocks may be said to be almost daily, and I have been told by Ferengees, long residing there, that they have often stood at the window ready to jump out when the house may be tumbling about them. Hence their buildings are partly subterranean, and all of mud, the least likely to crack.

On the day of my arrival, and while smoking my first pipe of repose, I noticed the china basins knocking against each other. "Oh! it is only an earthquake; nothing when you are used to it,"—was the reply to my enquiry as to the cause.

The way over this denuded ground was varied by gardens and villages, richly watered, and the largest streams having generally poplar plantations, the green foliage of which is a great relief to the eye amid the sunburnt walls and monotonous mud regions. At length arriving at a very respectable pile of building, this was announced to me as the "Bagy Seffre."

Various terraces at the entrance contained baths and other subterranean buildings, which were intricate and decaying. I traversed many of them,

and bounding up the steps, it was very refreshing to look over the walls, if only to take a peep into the "garden of delight," redolent as it appeared to be of fruits and flowers of every sort. But peeping over the walls will not do for me; so I moved on to the principal entrance, and thundering at the gateway, sought for admission into this seeming Eden of delights. "Sabre Koon,"—"Stop," said my attendant, "although the prince is absent, yet I believe his harem are there; if so, you cannot be admitted." Fortunately, they had all taken flight the previous day, so I ran up the terrace, snuffing in the flowery sweets, which in great abundance were "wasting their fragrance on the desert air." Here was

> "Laburnum rich in streaming gold, syringa ivory pure,
> The scented and the scentless rose,"

and I know not what besides. The trellised vinery hung over the paths, rich in offerings of white and purple fruit, the abundance of which almost impeded my way.

There is a formality in the style of the Persian gardens rather inconsistent with our English taste, and any thing but true to nature; formal walks,

straight alleys, and so on. The mud walls were very respectable, inclosing I should think about twenty acres of ground.

The gardens were numerous, all on ascending ground. These I traversed, until I came to what may be deemed the palace, which is all mud; though within, it was certainly plastered and ornamented. The "deewan kaneh," or reception room, was still carpetted,—this being the only Persian furniture; and the "nummed," which the prince had occupied the day before, was pointed out to me as of curious workmanship. It appeared to be a thick felt, stamped with a border pattern. Here his highness squats by day, and sometimes sleeps by night; one cannot call it *sitting*; for he puts his feet as it were into the pockets of his "shalwars," or trousers. Here, too, he prays. From the same spot he invokes the Prophet and plays the monarch.

On the walls of this apartment were painted some strange figures—strong in colouring, stronger in grimace; with straight knees, square arms, and stiff necks. The countenances of the attendants were all of the beseeching kind; by which I mean humility ultra profound, as much as to say, "the

very breath we draw is not our own, it is all of the prince's bounty." The subject of the chase is a great favourite with the Persian artists. Their heros are all "Rustams;" they are always spearing the wild boar, or engaged in some such gallant pastime.

They have no idea whatever of perspective, consequently the distant groups are treading down those on the foreground, and the hind legs of the horses intended to be miles off are upon the necks of the rear riders.

As I was obviously struck with those singular combinations, some of the many "faroshs" who were about, asked me if there were any such paintings in my own country. "Certainly not," said I, and they evidently accepted my reply as a proof of the superiority of the arts in Persia.

The Persians ornament very beautifully with coloured tiles and glass, formed in medallions and fancy figures, sometimes with Koran inscriptions, so exquisitely done in the Arabic characters, that no European engraver could excel them.

Their carpets have a richness of colouring and softness of texture quite unrivalled; and they

cannot be soiled, as every one leaves his slippers at the door.

The deficiency of furniture is made up for by the "taukja," as they call it, in the walls. These are a sort of blank windows, which form shelves for the deposit of China basins and other ornaments. I never saw any building, however inferior, without the "taukja:" even the stables and "kăveh kanehs," or entrances, must be so ornamented.

The windows, though large on the whole, are divided into small squares or compartments, filled sometimes with coloured glass, sometimes with paper only; glass being but of recent introduction into Persia. The buildings have invariably the flat roof, still covered with mud; but the bricklayer will turn arches, with a dexterity which would astonish an English artisan, and without any centre whatever. I have seen them building the dome of a bazaar almost equal in size to that of St. Paul's. They plant the bricks most rapidly, and in a cement so strong, that it is immediately fixed without any chance of disturbance. Here I first saw what may be termed the *skue* arch to great perfection.

I ran over the different rooms of the princes' residence, even down to the "zyr y zemeens," or cellars. The chief features were formality and mud, at which I laughed inwardly and praised outwardly. "Had the 'padi shah,' in my own country any thing to be compared to this?" asked the "peish khidmet," or head servant. This was taxing my complimentary powers rather too far, so I moved "the previous question," which was to depart; and hastening through another garden, I found numerous "takhts," or sleeping places, being large wooden platforms, raised about three feet from the ground. They were planted about in different directions, and seemingly in great confusion, as though the eunuch the day before had given but short notice for the departure of the prince's harem. Just above was a large tank of water, which it is so refreshing to look upon in this arid country, and from it rippled down in varied streams the supplies to the different gardens.

I walked through these pleasant places again and again, my senses of sight and smell revelling in the scene, amidst the fruits and flowers of the parterre. To me there is no luxury in Persia

comparable to these gardens, of which they say, "Behold these sweet groves, beautiful gardens, and flowing streams. Is it not a spot for the abode of heroes? The ground resembles velvet, and the air breathes perfume—you would say that the rose had imparted its sweets to the waters of the rivulet—the stalk of the lily bends under the weight of the flower, and the whole grove is charmed with the fragrance of the rose-bush—from this moment till time is no more, may the borders of these banks resemble the bowers of Paradise."

The gardens around Tabreez are very extensive. My custom was at an early hour to ride on horseback through these extensive grounds, planted with the choicest fruits and other produce. They are left open to the stranger, although belonging to many proprietors; their boundaries are merely a row of trees, or a drain of water.

The Persian mode of irrigation is ingenious and complete, and the soil most prodigal. Their peaches, melons, and grapes are of a flavour unknown in Europe. These fruits form much of the food of the natives, and droves of donkeys laden with it are constantly on the way to the city.

Then there are the olive grounds, very extensive; and the luxury of inhaling, while on horseback, the fragrance of the blossoms, which is very evanescent, in a thicket of flowers (if I may so say) for miles around, must be felt to be understood.

It is customary to form parties, and to spend days in the gardens, pitching tents, &c., but this is by no means necessary, since the night air gives no humidity. Give a "panabad," or sixpence, to the proprietor, and you may remain in the garden all day, and fill yourself with fruit, on which the Persians feed so abundantly.

The prince had other large gardens near the city, to which he occasionally resorted; but more particularly his household. When I saw them they had been suffering from "Russian blight;" the trees were cut down, and even the buildings destroyed for fuel by those "Scythian destroyers," (as Napoleon called them at Moscow), during their temporary occupation of Tabreez.

There was an English association with the "bagy seffre," which interested me much. Here drew his last breath our late envoy, Sir John Macdonald Kennier, so much and deservedly

respected in Persia. He was the prince's confidential friend, and was frequently referred to by him irrespective of English affairs. He was the great agent for bringing about the peace of Tourkamanchai, with the Russians, and for appeasing their anger when the Persian populace murdered their ambassador. Quiet and unobtrusive, yet firm and discriminating, he performed his official duties with unmixed satisfaction to both English and Persians.

The prince's regard for Sir John Kennier was shown on frequent occasions; nor could he manifest it in a greater degree than by allowing him to draw his last breath, as it were, on his own mat. This from a Mahomedan prince to a "kaffir," or infidel, was an extraordinary proof of esteem.

The Elchee, (then Colonel Macdonald only), was kept for a long time on the threshold of Persia; for, as being merely the Honourable Company's envoy, the King refused to receive the mission. At length he was invited *over* the threshold, and on the 7th September 1826 his Majesty most graciously received him, he being then in camp. In the month of June 1830 the envoy succombed to a long and wasting illness of

six months, closing his official career with dignity and honour to himself and his country, and to the great regret of all who knew him. He had been distinguished in the literary world by an intelligent narrative of travels in Asia Minor, and was said, some time before his death, to have been preparing for the press a history of Persia. Highly respected by the Honourable Company for his services, they were rewarded by his sovereign with the honour of knighthood, which was bestowed just in time to enable him to descend to the tomb "Sir John Macdonald Kinnier."

I found from the Colonel's passport, that courteous reception from the "Count d'Erivansky," (General Paskevitch), which facilitated my travels, and converted difficulties into enjoyments. "For the Colonel's sake," said he, "I will do all that you may require." The Elchee's remains, at his particular request, were conveyed to the Armenian monastry of Echmiazin, at Erivan, and a monument, prepared in London, was lately erected over his tomb.

In the valley below ran the river Haji, to be traced only by a forest of garden ground skirting its banks. On pursuing my way down a beautiful

valley, which Spring enriches with her luxuriance, and Autumn with her abundance, shut in by barren and arid hills, which form a fanciful amphitheatre, and on a mound, whether natural or artificial I cannot tell, stands the once round towered outwork of a fortress called Rushedia, in tolerable preservation. Here I found some little scope for the antiquary, and could trace the inner and outer walls, with the dry ditch, and the bases of other towers, with the citadel in the middle, preserving at least its ancient form, and some of its masonry.

To dive into the heights and depths of this formerly strong bulwark was quite beyond me, amidst piles of perishing bricks, and masses of crumbling masonry, mixing with the earth from which they were formed. The situation is commanding, the positions well chosen to check any intruders from the valley below, and behind the fortress, nature has thrown up such a barrier as almost to claim cloud acquaintance.

I could speculate, and calculate, and ruminate as I stood in the centre tower, but all to no purpose. I could come to no conclusion, by enquiry or otherwise, as to the origin of the fortress.

Some people attribute it to the Turks; but I think it must have been built before the Turks were known in this part of the world, almost before the birth of Ishmael, their great progenitor, for I never saw such perfect ruins.

Descending to the lower regions of the spot, I found one or two large mouths of brick-work. These openings I understood to be subterranean ways to a large mosque, about five miles distant. It was with the greatest difficulty I could advance about five yards; and the only thing worthy of notice, was the easy beauty of the arches, and the extremely fresh appearance of the bricks, which looked, after the lapse of perhaps two thousand years, to have been planted there only yesterday. I have already alluded to the modern brick arches of this country, which appear to me to be the very perfection of masonry.

Hastening my return from Rushedia, I had to pass the ruins of the mosque Sultan Kazan, which is about a mile from Tabreez. This was, no doubt, formerly one of the distinguished quarters of the city. My former explorings had begotten me a taste for time-worn rubbish, and the crumblings of ages, so I must run over the

anatomy of this. Its fine ruined arches, rent and torn asunder by the dreadful earthquake before alluded to, were yet in perpendicular, although by a terrible yawn of the ground on which they stood there was a fissure in the grand dome sufficient to intimidate me from standing under it. The front arch was in tolerable preservation, well proportioned, and faced with coloured tiles, fancifully inlaid with the Arabic characters. The walls were of a prodigious thickness, having been lined with the Tabreez marble, immense blocks of which were laying about with the rubbish.

The various fragments yet standing, and masses of brick-work detached, and threatening other falls, bespoke this mosque to have been a once lofty and imposing structure; and from what my eye could compass, and my imagination fathom, by linking together the different arches and fragments alluded to, I think it would not have disgraced even Palladio himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

A VISIT TO SULIMANIA.

On my way to Tehran I had to pass through this pretty village, having made various stages to it, some of which I will notice.

Early in the morning I was on a fine road leading to Armakaneh, a very large village, and nine hours from our last station. Here I found a splendid "menzil," or post-house for strangers, and plenty of water gushing out from its soil in all directions. This is the source of all their riches, and an abundance of corn and other produce proclaimed the extent of those riches.

On the following day I left the village, by a tremendous pass, which is sometimes considered

dangerous for travellers; the way, which was afterwards good, was strewed with flourishing villages and well watered valleys. I need scarcely say that in Persia, what we denominate roads are totally unknown. The paths which lead from station to station are established by custom, convenience, or the caprice of the traveller, where, in a semi-barbarous country, "the world is all before him where to choose." So capricious had they been in this direction, that I found it quite a series of cross roads, leading to the important town of Zenjan.

This town was walled, and contained extensive bazaars and caravanseries. I had to traverse the former; as in almost all the cities in Persia the bazaars are the high roads through them. I was an object of much curiosity with the rude natives, and must confess that I felt rather uncomfortable at their searching gaze, having only servants with me, and the people so unaccustomed to see a Ferengee stranger.

Resting that night at the caravansery, I was impatient to escape, as it were, from the rough lodging of a Persian khan, and summoning my followers, I issued from the gate at an early hour. We were well armed, an indispensable precaution

when travelling through this wild country; the being unarmed is an invitation to attack.

I could now again breathe freely on the extensive plains of Sultaniah. It was studded with ruined villages. The first which I arrived at was without a single inhabitant; and some others had only small groups of half clad peasantry, looking the very personification of misery. The dome of the tomb of Ismael Khouda Benda is to be seen from hence at a great distance, so much so that I fancied I should never reach it.

This imposing structure has very little of its original magnificence remaining. The cupola rests on an octangular base, and is about a hundred feet high. The gates are all down; but over them were galleries, leading from the inner to the outer part of the building. The interior is in good keeping, having here and there some beautiful Arabic inscriptions in gilded characters. But the saint's rest is wofully desecrated by all comers. We breakfasted in one of the niches or chapels, aud the horses in another.

On this plain stood formerly the capital of Persia, and the residence of its kings, until the time of Abbas the Great, who made Ispahan the capital of

his empire. In the time of Chardin, Sultaniah was still a city, and surrounded with walls, but now nothing can be more desolate than this waste; the only exception is the modern building of a summer residence for the late Shah, which I visited.

The Shah generally formed a camp in the summer season. The extensive pasturage would feed an army of horses. The way to Khoramdereh was through a flat uninteresting country, poorly watered, and inhabited by the wild Eleaut tribes, in their black tents; they are seemingly perfectly inoffensive. These nomades desert their villages in the summer, and follow the pasturage with their flocks. The soil seems to belong to the first comers, and the inhabitants are so few as compared with the extensive territory of Persia, that all can be fed at small expense of labour.

Koramdereh, or "the happy valley," is a large village, embowered in its own woods, and watered by a copious stream. It has a very interesting effect from the neighbouring hills. Proceeding on to Kerishkeen, some villages intersect the spacious plain which leads to it, as the river takes its course; and again the road was deemed inse-

cure, in consequence of the rocky passes, which are always favourable for the interruption of travellers, and give a wild romantic feature to the country. This is a Turcoman village, and I had some difficulty to get accommodated in a wretched "menzil;" this being out of the regular way to Tehran.

The approach to Kazvine was varied and interesting; the most so of any on the route. The way was watry, with pretty villages here and there, and the busy natives were gathering their crops. Their custom is to lay a couple of sheaves at the feet of travellers, as a sign of welcome; but it is intended more as a levy on their liberality: trust the Adjemis for worming the coins out of the pocket! there are no people more ingenious at it.

A smiling prospect pervaded the whole scene, bespeaking health and prosperity. The large city of Kazvine was visible at a great distance. On approaching, its extensive vineyards at the outskirts showed abundant fruit, although very destitute of water. I plunged into the wretched bazaars, through which my way led to the caravansery, which afforded but miserable accommodations.

I found the natives more surprised than ever at

the sight of a Ferengee stranger, and more uncivil in their gaping. Kazvine was formerly a very large city, and is said to have been the royal residence. It was founded in the third century, and was formerly called "Djemal Abad," or the beautiful city, but now its beauty is turned into ashes; for I never saw more wretched bazaars. Its extensive ruins were occasioned by an earthquake. The roofs in many parts are merely branches of trees. Thus much for the Persian's respect for posterity.

The plain is most extensive on which this city is planted. It is situated at the foot of Mount Elwend, a branch of the Taurus, which separates Irak Adjemi from the districts of Hyrcania. Even in Chardin's days it reckoned nearly a hundred thousand inhabitants, though now reduced to less than half that amount. Its vineyards are extensive and unenclosed. I rode through miles of this ground, and noticed that the vine grows about six feet high, without any support, and that the fruit was excellent.

As I went over the extensive plains the next morning, nothing could be more desolate than their arid parched appearance, without any thing

for the eye to rest upon but the long line of "kenauts," the Persian means of irrigation. These are aqueducts, made by a succession of small wells, at a hundred yards distance from each other, their depth being determined by the level of the soil. They are connected by a channel below, sufficiently capacious for a man to clear it. These wells are began at the spring head, and conveyed from an immense distance to the fields and villages. The earth thrown up from them is all that the eye has to glance at. It marks the direction and length of the subterranean aqueducts. This mode of irrigation is attributed to a very ancient date in Persia, even to Houshang, the second king of that country.

After travelling through the sandy desert for four or five hours, the ground entirely denuded of tree or bush, I halted at one of these water holes, by the side of which our wallet being opened, both man and beast were refreshed. The remainder of my way to Kishlock was the most trying portion of my journey, it being out of the line of the "kenauts," consequently no water could be obtained; and what made it the more trying was, the effect of the mirage, which fre-

quently presented me with what I took to be fine basins of water, when, on hastening to quench my thirst, I found nothing but basins of sand.

The deceptions are astonishing in these extensive plains; and not merely the watery ones; for the dazzling lustre of the mid-day sun, its eddying rays fiercely burning up the thirsty soil, betray the imagination to all sorts of vagaries.

My weariness of body, as I turned in the saddle, seeking some new position for ease, harassed by the monotony of a scene which seemed to have no end; the continued disappointments, as sometimes one of the party would cry out, "Aub ast," "there is water," and off we galloped, but on nearing it found nothing but sand: all this made the present the most trying day I had ever experienced in Persia. On advancing to seeming objects, such as villages or gardens, the nearer we came, the faster they receded. I could catch nothing, and therefore gave up the attempt in gloomy sulkiness.

These phenomena certainly vary the tameness of the scene, and I could occasionally laugh as the "will-o-the-wisp" danced before me. Even after frequent disappointments, I sometimes felt so sure

as to be determined to attain my object; but I got laughed at by my train, who being more accustomed to Persian deceptions than myself, (the mirage included) would cry out, "Hych ast sahib," "It is nothing."

At length the distant view of the village induced me to quicken my pace, that I might not fall off from pure exhaustion. Even here, however, no water was for a long time to be found, and I was glad to drink from a brook in which the horses' legs were then being washed.

At Kishlock, a small camp was formed of the Russian battalion under Samson Sarang, about twelve hundred troops in all; these being deserters from Russia, and long employed in the Persian service.

The next morning the drum beat at an early hour for the march of the battalion on the way to join the Prince's army in Khorassan. I studiously avoided falling in with them, by delaying my march for some hours. The misery of encountering a military detachment in Persia may be likened to a visit of locusts, and many are the villages devastated by the freebooters, who have unbridled license to help themselves to supplies.

I have seen houses destroyed that they may take the wood for fuel, and falling into their track, I could scarcely procure here the necessary supplies of bread and water; and as to my resting-place, it was the brick-floored vault of an old caravansery, filled with vermin and filth. Quartering the troops in Persia means that all are to provide themselves as best suits them, and when they determine on occupying a house, they turn out the possessor; who, with his wives and family, may go into the streets. They seize or burn his furniture, and in reply to his appeals against this hard usage, he is consoled by either hearing that it is not to last long, or by having his heels turned up for the bastinado!

At break of day I was in my saddle, and with my long train led the way to Sulimania. There is something of a lonely desolation which comes over the mind when travelling in this wild country, every feature of which is so peculiarly its own, with its ruined villages, rocky passes, and boundless plains, giving it all the appearance of savage life; the wild native starting up here and there, eying the Ferengee stranger with the struggling feeling of curiosity and cupidity, half

inclined to pounce upon his prey, but checked by that confiding security which claims his hospitality and protection.

Suddenly I found myself environed by a host of armed troopers. Besides the Russian battalion, there was the Tourkaman, the Koords and the Eleauts of the different tribes. Their miscellaneous costumes and equipments beggar all description. Although they have nominally the royal pay, they must mount and equip themselves; hence that heterogeneous *materiel* of which a Persian army is composed. Almost all the population of Persia is armed; there is, therefore, no difficulty of outfit in this department. The King summons the chiefs of the tribes, who must appear at camp with their cohort ready to take the field. The Eleauts, and some others, pay no other tribute.

Discipline is very severe under the immediate eye of the commandant, as I had once an opportunity of judging at the camp of Sardaha. The victim (a deserter) was brought up and judged, and orders immediately given for punishment. He was first beat over the mouth with a large stick by the faroshs, until his teeth were

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knocked in; then his beard was cut off, — a great disgrace in Persia. His hands were then tied behind, and his heels turned up for the bastinado; and most unmercifully were the sticks applied, and many broken. Not only the nails, but almost the toes were knocked off. The sticks not being deemed sufficiently strong, thongs were brought, and the bastinado renewed. On loosing his hands, his fingers were disabled. A rope was then tied around his body, and he was dragged over the rough stones to some distance up a mountain, and dreadfully lacerated. Here he was to remain for execution the next day.

Presenting as bold a front as I could, I kept in the centre of these ruffian-looking troops, thinking that there was less chance of being robbed in the midst of them than by keeping in the rear. I was an object of the greatest interest, many probably never having seen a Ferengee stranger before. I soon recognised some of the Malesghird tribe, with their shields and lances, looking as fierce as when they threatened to take me a head shorter in their own country.

After about half an hour's ride in the midst of them, the heat and dust became intolerable; so

I suddenly went off into a neighbouring ravine, and bade adieu to the gallant troops of Abbas Meerza.

Melting under the mid-day sun, and searching every corner of my saddle for a position of ease, I entered the lonely spot of Sulimania, watered and wooded to my heart's content. The outskirts showed many crumbling walls and tumble-down buildings, which bespoke much of the spoil of time; and as I entered what was once a caravansery, I nauseated the wretched accommodation, and soon made my escape to the "bauleh kaneh" of the entrance to the palace.

As I lay stretched on my carpet, smoking my pipe of repose, a profusion of the finest apricots, grapes, and sundry fruits was laid before me. I was soon invited into the palace, where a room had been cleaned out, and a carpet spread for my reception. The room was open to the garden, and it gave me a most luxurious rest. Such an Elysium I fancied even "The Thousand and One Nights" had never presented. The gardens were extensive, and the fruits of every sort so abundant, that the look of it served much to satiate all appetite. The palace had been built by Futtee

Ali Shah, in honour of the birth of a son, Sulimán, at this place; hence its name of Sulimania.

In the "deewan kaneh," or grand reception room, were full-length portraits of his Majesty and family, including the young prince. I am always much amused at these displays of the Persian art; the stately rigidity of the monarch and the "shah zadehs," or princes, decked in their oriental jewellery, has a most *imposing* effect. On the opposite wall was the eunuch Agha Mahommed Shah, and his courtiers, forming altogether the finest gallery of Persian paintings that I had seen. I have already alluded to the rigidity of posture and fixedness of muscle which so distinguish the arts in this country.

I had never found any repose so agreeable at the time as that I enjoyed at Sulimania. The birds carolled, the breeze murmured, the fountains bubbled; and as I lay upon my nummed, I seemed to realise the description of Ferdoosi: "The ground is a perfect silk, and the air is scented with musk."

This royal residence is on a large scale, and comprises a high tower of observation, from whence the prisoners of the Harem were per-

mitted to survey the surrounding country. The baths were fine, the stabling good, and the Harem Kaneh so extensive, that I lost myself in its intricacies. This was once a favourite resort of the late Shah, and its proximity to Tehran (only eight hours) made it more attractive; but latterly the royal caprice had veered to some other point.

Whether from extreme fatigue, exhaustion from thirst, or debility from hunger, I thought that I had never found a respite from these three angry feelings so agreeable as at Sulimania. My bottle had been spent in the desert, (it is customary to carry one of wood,) and I had been sensibly touched with the feelings of Hagar, though not with her despair. Here the ripe fruit dropped, as it were, into my mouth, as I walked under the trellised vinery; and the sudden transition from want to abundance, from weariness to ease, seemed to me somewhat of the magic of Aladdin. All enjoyments are comparative; to be keenly relished they must be earned. The slothful voluptuary, "who knows no fatigue but that of idleness," is a stranger to that stimulating pleasure which the sweat of the brow or the labour of the muscles gives to the peasant or the mechanic.

CHAPTER IX.

TOORKOMANCHAI.

I WAS much interested by my short stay at this village. It was here that the treaty of peace was signed between Persia and Russia, in 1828. My companion was present at the time, in the suite of the late British envoy, who was the principal means of bringing it about, as deputed by Abbas Meerza. Our Ketkodeh was very loquacious and entertaining on the subject, whose house the Russians had occupied some ten or twelve days. My companion took the Colonel's place, and I took the nummed of the General-in-chief, Paskevitch (Count d'Erivansky).

It was with considerable difficulty that the

affairs were adjusted, which were to restore perfect amity and everlasting friendship, to be broken only at the first convenience, between the "Padi Shah of all the Russias," and the "Cousin of the Sun and Moon." More than once did the General rise from his seat, and declare that he would go on to Tehran, to which there could have been no opposition offered; but by the Colonel's "head of prudence he was guided to the line of moderation;" and after long and tedious negociations, precisely at twelve o'clock at night did the cannon "bruit it to the heavens" that peace was re-established between the two ever-enduring empires of Persia and Russia.

Then came the rejoicings, the embracings, powder and shot exchanged for pilau and champagne; and the sturdy combatants, ready before to draw the sword of contention, were now seen together smoking the pipe of friendship.

Our venerable host, or "rysh soofeid," with his long white beard, was fast declining into his native dust; asthma had seized him, and his bellows were leaking at every pore. The very temperate habits of the Persian peasantry, to whom alcohol is unknown, leads them on through

a long vale of time. There is scarcely one in a hundred amongst them who knows his own age; for there are no registries of births, either public or private. I have often asked them the question, and they will range sometimes from seventy to a hundred years.

Our host seemed to feel the pride of having assisted at these negociations. "Mashallah," said he, with all the importance of having witnessed it. He was full of anecdotes respecting the Russians, and spoke as loudly as he could of their liberality, which I will do them the justice to say I find to be their invariable character wherever I go, with friend or foe, in all countries. They are not only just in their monetary transactions, but highly *liberal.* I have heard this both on the continent and in the east.

Passing the day in our village, at lazy length, with the inexhaustible "tchibook;" quarrelling with the dogs, or visiting the natives; it is sometimes rather difficult to "feather the wings of time." What a plague are these said dogs to Persian travel; their number, their unappeasable ferocity, their canine jealousy at the sight of a Ferengee stranger! On moving off one's carpet,

the first question always is, "Where are the dogs?" then, whip in hand, you must battle through them every inch of ground. In the large towns they herd together in parties, on the walls, at the gates, and other prominent stations, perhaps forty or fifty in a herd, headed by a small cur; when he begins, the herd take the signal to pursue any stranger, man or dog—for they never allow the intrusion of a member of any other herd. They are useful as scavengers, but a great annoyance to travellers. The Mahomedans have a prejudice in their favour; I don't know what; but you dare not kill a dog. If there be any complaint, it must be made to the "beglerbeg," or mayor of the town, and he receives it with as much formality as if it were against any other inhabitant.

Emerging from our village at break of day, on the high road to Tehran, I found it more interesting than some other branches, and dissimilar from that monotony so generally pervading Persian travel. The passes were rugged, the rivers deep; the latter offer some dangers where bridges are so scarce and so imperfect. Plunging into one of them rather hastily, my horse lost his footing, and was fast carried off by the stream, and being driven

on a sand-bank, had a hard struggle to gain the opposite side. There being always some difficulty with the baggage-horses, crossing the rivers becomes a scene of some interest, as these streams sometimes contain the most treacherous whirlpools, swallowing up man and beast; of which Sir John Malcolm gives a striking anecdote in his history.

We next got into a most difficult ravine, the ups and downs of which made the horses snort, and we lost our way in the wilderness. At length we emerged into a Koordish village, in which we could scarcely obtain the hospitality of *water*; for these people are but little removed above the flocks and herds they live amongst, and one feels degraded to see human beings reduced to any thing so low in the scale of creation: they merely vegetate on the soil which feeds them, their dens sometimes disturbed by the cattle, and they lie down together amidst the mutual dung and rubbish. I always prefer the cattle apartment where there is a distinction, and have often enjoyed the warm shelter of a stable, sleeping luxuriously on the hard ground, my horse snorting over me. There is a certain luxury in this easy and aboriginal mode, of which we get plenty in Persian travel.

We then paid a visit to the Khan's village of Sheik der Abaud; the Ketkodeh, with numerous villagers, some on horse, some on ass-back, according to their means, coming out to meet him; and the respectful homage with which he was conducted to his tent, with their "Kush amadeed," or welcome; the impatient haste of the Rayahs, as they thronged around the Khan's horse; their noisy vociferations through the village, "the Khan is come:" made it a most amusing scene. I took all this for attachment to the Khan's government, which had been renowned for clemency and liberality—so much so, that many new settlers came to sit under "the protecting shadow of his countenance."

Then began the "chum y chum," or compliments; quite a shower of them. The Khan seeing the flourishing state of the village, "Your face is whitened," said he to the Ketkodeh; to which he replied, "May your condescension never be less. If I have any salt, 'tis the salt of the Khan; all I have is his." He is then permitted to sit at the end of the nummed, and the pipe of condescension is offered to him from the Khan's mouth; this is the highest proof of favour.

I was exceedingly amused at witnessing these proceedings. As the natives stood around, whilst the Khan held his village parliament, their sundry griefs and wants were enumerated, sometimes with noisy clamour. One fellow was particularly vociferous with his sufferings. I fancy he had been ill-used, from the many attempts to put him down. The parliamentary usage of "spoke," not being sufficient, "Stop his mouth," said the Khan; with that the "farosh" hit him such a blow with a stick as silenced him at once, and cut short the thread of his discourse, and as I imagined, with some damage to his future eloquence, since he must have swallowed some of his teeth.

The Ketkodeh then made a report of his administration; the levies of corn, of rice, and other produce for the Khan's use; that so many new subjects had been born to him; so many arrived; and the thousand and one incidents of a Persian village were most eloquently detailed. He then recapitulated the wants of the villagers; amongst others a "hummum," or bath, was asked for, and immediately granted. "Barikallah," said the gapesters, "may your bounty never be less." Many other demands were summarily acceded to.

The bounteous Khan was now appealed to by the Moolah who wanted a new mosque to be built for the followers of Ali. As I sat on my nummed of novelty, and smoked my pipe of meditation, I began to think that here the Khan's liberality would be stayed (seeing that he was not a Mahomedan, but an "Isauvi," or Christian). To my great astonishment, this was also granted. "What!" said I to the Khan with indignant surprise; "you going to raise a temple to the worship of the impostor?" He laughed. "Not a bit of it," said he; "I neither intend it, nor do they expect it." So here was Persian legislation! no one deceived but myself! They had been bandying about compliments, promises, and thanks, for an hour or so, without any meaning beyond that of "Persian courtesies," which, to use a homely phrase, are as "plenty as blackberries."

The debates were no longer interesting to me; I immediately rose, and the Khan followed, surrounded by his numerous vassals, all lauding him with their "May the Khan's shadow increase, and his bounty grow," and finally the "Khoda hafiz shuma," "may God take you into his holy protection." The Parliament was broken up, and the

House prorogued *sine die.* The Persians are very polite, certainly, which it must be admitted is an agreeable concomitant of character; but as to trusting them!—But I have done; though I should not omit saying that the Khan's obedient subjects were so captivated with his robes, that the same night they plundered the tent of almost of every thing it possessed, whilst we were sleeping in it. Of course every enquiry was instituted, the bastinado threatened, but no delinquent could be found. The general custom is to begin with the Ketkodeh, who is soon degraded from his high station to the "felek,"* and so on through the village, until the culprit is discovered. But the Khan was afraid to proceed to such extremities, either dreading an *emeute,* or that it would be somewhat inconsistent with his late parliamentary courtesies.

Luckily for me, my things escaped, or they would have *told* amongst the Sheik der Abaudies, there being a marked difference between their "shelwars" and my tights. Suffice it that

* This is a mode of punishment peculiar, I believe, to Persia. A long pole is held up by two men, having a noose in the middle of it, through which the feet of the culprit are passed, whilst two others strike upon them according to the sentence of so many sticks.

the robbers were never found out; they put it upon the Eleauts, or wandering tribes, who, they said, had been prowling about our tent, though no one saw them. I imagined that the Khan having promised so liberally, they doubted his sincerity, and therefore helped themselves to what they could find—a genuine specimen this of Persian character. They do not even believe themselves—how can they believe each other? They say "Falsehood mixed with good intentions, is preferable to truth tending to excite strife."

"Let us be off," said I to the Khan, almost dreading that they might dispute with us even our "personals." He laughed at my ignorance of the Persian customs, boasted of his subjects, and proceeded to legislate on the affairs of the village.

Whilst he was thus occupied some eight or ten days, I strolled about on horseback into some of those pretty nooks and recesses with which the neighbourhood abounded. Amongst others, was the "Baugy Zardaloo," or apricot garden, literally so, since it was planted with these trees exclusively, forming a beautiful umbrageous retreat. The origin of this place was rather interesting.

A house, now in ruins, had been built some twenty years before by order of the Prince, for the accommodation of Mr. Williamson, an Englishman, who had come to Persia to superintend the working of the extensive copper mines supposed to exist in this district of Sheik der Abaud.

Here I found the remains of furnaces, with other fragments of mining operations. These mines form quite a history in this country. It is singular, and perhaps almost peculiar to the Persian soil, that the finest promises end in empty nothings. I speak of *natural* deceptions, not *personal* ones. I had been already taken in by the "subah kauzib," or "the false dawn;" likewise by the "sahrah," or "mirage," which, to a thirsty traveller, I found to be the most tantalizing. But now I was to be taken in by finding native copper on the surface, whilst the bowels were empty veins of ore, leading to threads, and then lost, no one could tell where; there was just enough to keep up the deception for a time, and then, Persian like, they would only mock your expectations. Digging and digging, "now we have it," said M——; "here is a vein inexhaustible:" and after much toil it totally disappeared.

I had much experience in this village, and began to like my domicile amongst the villagers; even the dogs became civil. There is also a sort of charm about Persian servants, I mean the way in which they serve you, although you know you cannot trust them. I was plundered by them several times, but what of that? They are always ready with their prompt attention, waiting on your looks, almost anticipating your wants; and then their agreeable "belli sahib," to any thing you may ask, right or wrong. And how agreeable in the morning, on opening your eyes, to find them waiting with the "tchibook" ready lit, and the excellent cup of coffee. How many a cloud have I whiffed from my pillow, which I deem the "Persian Elysium." There is another advantage in Persian servants: if you are in a bad humour, in order to get out of it you may cuff them about like a parcel of foot-balls; they spring up again with their "belli sahib," not at all offended.

They have a curious custom in this country of endeavouring to find out a thief. They prepare the "hak-reezi," which is a heap of earth in a dark place, through which the servants are to pass

—in at one door, out at the other. It would be rather uncivil to suspect any one in particular; so to avoid personalities, you request the thief to drop the stolen articles in the earth, and nothing more will be said about it. I tried the experiment, but without success.

CHAPTER X.

HENRY MARTIN.

Of this distinguished missionary and champion of the cross, who fearlessly unfolded his banner and proclaimed Christ amongst the bigotted Mahomedans, I have heard much in these countries, having made acquaintance with some persons who knew him, and saw (if I may so say) the last of him.

At the General's table at Erzroume (Paskevitch), I had the honour to meet graffs and princes, consisting of Russians, Georgians, Circassians, Germans, Spaniards, and Persians, all glittering in their stars and orders, such a *mélange* as is

scarcely to be found again under one banner; looking more like a monarch's levy than any thing else. My neighbour was an Armenian bishop, who, with his long flowing hair and beard, and austere habits, the cross being suspended to his girdle, presented a great contrast to the military chiefs. There were many other priests at the table, of whom he was the principal. He addressed me in my native tongue very tolerably, asking if I had known any thing of the missionary, Martin. The name was magic to my ear, and immediately our colloquy became to me of great interest.

The bishop was the Serrafino of whom Martin speaks in his journal, p. 454, I happening, at the time, to have it with me. He was very superior to the general caste of the Armenian clergy, having been educated at Rome, and had attained many European languages. He made Martin's acquaintance at Etchmiazin, the Armenian monastery at Erivan, where he had gone to pay a visit to the Patriarch, or chief of that people, and remained three days to recruit his exhausted strength. He described him to me as being of a very delicate frame, thin, and not quite of the middle stature, a beardless youth, with a countenance beaming

with so much benignity as to bespeak an errand of Divine love. Of the affairs of the world he seemed to be so ignorant, that Serrafino was obliged to manage for him respecting his travelling arrangements, money matters, &c. Of the latter he had a good deal with him when he left the monastery, and seemed to be careless, and even profuse, in his expenditure. He was strongly recommended to postpone his journey, but from his extreme impatience to return to England, these remonstrances were unavailing. A Tartar was employed to conduct him to Tocat. Serrafino accompanied him for an hour or two on the way—with considerable apprehensions, as he told me, of his ever arriving in his native country.* He was greatly surprised, he said, not only to find in him all the ornaments of a refined education, but that he was so eminent a Christian; "since (said he) all the English I have hitherto met with, not only make no profession of religion, but live seemingly in contempt of it."

I endeavoured to convince him that his impres-

* It is a custom in the East to accompany travellers out of the city to bid them God speed, with the "khoda hafiz shuma," "may God take you into his holy keeping." If an Armenian, he is accompanied by the priest, who prays over him and for him with much fervour.

sion of the English character was in this respect erroneous; that although a Martin on the Asiatic soil might be deemed a phœnix, yet many such existed in that country which gave him birth; and I instanced to him the Christian philanthropy of my countrymen, which induced them to search the earth's boundaries to extend their faith. I told him of our immense voluntary taxation to aid the missionaries in that object, and of the numerous Christian associations,—for which the world was scarcely large enough to expend themselves upon.

He listened with great attention, and then threw in the compliment, "you English are very difficult to become acquainted with, but when once we know you, we can depend on you." He complained of some part of Martin's journal referring to himself, respecting his then idea of retiring to India, to write and print some works in the Armenian language, tending to enlighten that people with regard to religion. He said, that what followed of the errors and superstitions of the Armenian church, should not have been inserted in the book, nor did he think it would be found in Martin's journal. His complaint rested much on the compilers of the work in this respect; he said,

"these opinions were not exactly so expressed, and certainly they were not intended to come before the public, whereby they might ultimately be turned against me."

At Erzroume, on my way to Persia, I had met with an Italian doctor, then in the Pasha's employ, from whom I heard many interesting particulars respecting Martin. He was at Tocat at the time of our countryman's arrival and death, which occurred on the 16th October, 1812; but whether occasioned by the plague, or from excessive fatigue by the brutal treatment of the Tartar, he could not determine. His remains were decently interred in the Armenian burying ground, and for a time the circumstance was forgotten. Some years afterwards, a gentleman, at the request of the British ambassador in Constantinople, had a commemorative stone erected to his memory, and application was made to the Armenian bishop to seek the grave for that purpose. He seemed to have forgotten altogether such an occurrence, but referring to some memoranda which he had made of so remarkable a case as that of interring a Ferengee stranger, he was enabled to trace the humble tablet with which he had distinguished it. It is now

ornamented with a white slab, stating merely the name, age, and time of death of the deceased.*

I had many reminiscences of Martin, at Marand particularly. I quitted this place at midnight, just at the time and under the circumstances which he describes. "It was a most mild and delightful night, and the pure air, after the smell of the stable, was reviving." I was equally solitary with himself. I had attached great interest to my resting-place, believing it to have been the same on which Martin had reposed, from his own description, as it was the usual reception for travellers, the "menzil," or post-house. Here I found myself almost alone, as with Aliverdy, my guide, not three words of understanding existed between us. Martin says, "they stared at my European dress,

* On my return to Erzroume, two years afterwards, I learnt the tragical end of the Italian doctor, who was sacrificed to Mahomedan vengeance. As the Russians were approaching the town, he happened to be the only European remaining there; and being in the Pasha's service, he deemed it to be ample protection; he became alarmed, however, at the feverish state of the town, and sent on his wife and family to Tocat, intending to join them there. Not half an hour elapsed before he was stopped by the Turks and shot; they then took him to one of the mosques, and hacked the body into morsels, with merciless barbarity. No motive could be assigned beyond that of an ebullition of savage feeling at Russian invasion.

but no disrespect was shown." Exactly so with me: the villagers stood around questioning my attendant, who was showing me off, I know not how.

Martin's description of the stable was precisely what I found it; thus—"I was shown into the stable, where there was a little place partitioned off, but so as to admit a view of the horses." He was "dispirited and melancholy." I was not a little touched with this in my solitariness, and sensibly felt with the poet:—

> "Thou dost not know, how sad it is to stray
> Amid a foreign land, thyself unknown,
> And when o'erwearied with the toilsome day,
> To rest at eve and feel thyself alone."

At Khoie, on my return, I witnessed the Persian ceremony related by Martin in his journal of the death of Imam Hussein—the anniversary of which is so religiously observed in that country. At Tabreez I heard much of him who was

> "——— Faithful found
> Among the faithless—faithful only he,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
> His loyalty he kept—his zeal—his love."

I scarcely remember so bright an ornament to the Christian profession, on heathen land, as this

hero of the cross, who was "patient in tribulation, rejoicing in hope;" and I heard him thus spoken of by those who could estimate the *man*, and perhaps not appreciate the *missionary*;—"If ever there was a saint on earth, it was Martin; and if there be now an angel in heaven, it is Martin." Amidst the contumely of the bigotted Musselmans, he had much to bear, as to the natural man, amongst whom he was called an "Isauvi," (the term given to Christians).

Martin's translation of the Scriptures did, at length, find royal protection in Persia, as by the following firman:—"In the name of God, whose glory is over all! It is our high will, that our dear friend, the worthy and respectable Sir Gore Ousley, Envoy Extraordinary from his Majesty the King of Great Britain, be informed that the book of the Gospel, translated into the Persian tongue by the labours of Henry Martin, of blessed memory, which has been presented to us in the name of the learned, worthy, and enlightened society of Christians, who have united for the purpose of spreading the divine books of the teacher Jesus (to whose name, as to that of all the prophets, be ascribed honour and blessing) has been received by us, and merits our

high acknowledgment. For many years the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were known in Persia; but now the whole of the New Testament is completely translated, which event is a new source of satisfaction to our enlightened mind. With the grace of God, the merciful, we will direct those of our servants who are admitted into our presence to read the said writings from beginning to end before us, that we may listen to their sentiments respecting the same. Inform the members of the above enlightened society, that they receive, as they merit, our thanks.

Given in Rebialavil, in the year of the Hegira 1229.

FUTTEE ALI SHAH KAJAR."

Thus much for the royal courtesy; but I will venture to say, that "the enlightened mind" was never once illuminated by hearing read the translations alluded to; he and his courtiers would rather spit upon them, than admit our Scriptures within the "dur kaneh," or palace gate. I have had proof of this in a German missionary, who, with much toil and bribery, smuggled some translations amongst them. On his quitting Persia,

they contemptuously tore them up in his presence, and trampled them in the dirt.

I know of no people where, to all human calculation, so little prospect opens of planting the cross. The moolahs are by no means averse to religious discussion, and still remember the "enlightened infidel," as Martin was called; but so bigotted are these benighted Moslems, and show so much zeal, as I noticed at their Ramazan, that they scorn us, and, I may say, they shame us. It is interesting, when looking at those dark regions, to enquire—when shall the cross triumph over the crescent? when shall the riches and power of the Gospel spread over their soil, root up the weeds of error, and produce the fruits of righteousness?

Since the days of Martin, but little effort has been made by the Missionary Society to turn the tide of Christian philanthropy towards this country; but I would say, 'spite of the discouragements, send your missionaries to this stronghold of Mahomet; here plant your standard of redeeming love to the wretched devotee of the impostor; to the sometime worshipper of the sun, hang out the banner of the Son of Righteousness; kindle in his bosom the flame of Divine truth, that the

Holy Spirit, of which his former God was the emblem, may enlighten and guide him into the fold of Christ.*

* It is gratifying to find from a paper in the "Asiatic Register," the writer of which spent a few weeks at Shiraz, that the love and work of this distinguished missionary, although he saw no fruits from them, have in one instance proved that "his labour has not been in vain in the Lord." He relates that in that city he met with an interesting character, Mahomed Rahem, who had been educated for a moolah; a man of considerable learning, and much attached to the English. He found him reading a volume of Cowper's Poems, and was astonished at the precision with which he expressed himself in English; this led to the subject of religion, when he acknowledged himself to be a Christian, and related the following circumstance.

"In the year of the Hegira 1223, there came to this city an Englishmân, who taught the religion of Christ with a boldness hitherto unparalleled in Persia, in the midst of much scorn and ill treatment from the moolahs as well as the rabble. He was a beardless youth, and evidently enfeebled by disease; he dwelt amongst us for more than a year. I was then a decided enemy to infidels, as the Christians are termed by the followers of Mahomet, and I visited this teacher of the despised sect, for the purpose of treating him with scorn, and exposing his doctrines to contempt. Although I persevered in this conduct for some time, I found that every interview not only increased my respect for the individual, but diminished my confidence in the faith in which I was educated. His extreme forbearance towards the violence of his opponents, the calm and yet convincing manner in which he exposed the fallacies and sophistries by which he was assailed (for he spoke Persian excellently), gradually inclined me to listen to his arguments, to enquire dispassionately into the subject of them, and finally to read a tract which he had written in reply

to " A Defence of Islamism," by our chief moolahs. The result of my examination was a conviction that the young disputant was right. Shame, or rather fear, withheld me from this opinion; I even avoided the society of the Christian teacher, though he remained in the city so long. Just before he quitted Shiraz I could not refrain from paying him a farewell visit. Our conversation, the memory of which will never fade from the tablet of my mind, sealed my conversion. He gave me a book; it has been my constant companion; the study of it has formed my most delightful occupation; its contents have often consoled me."

Upon this he put into my hand a copy of the New Testament in Persian, on one of the blank leaves was written, " there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth." HENRY MARTIN.

The only person I remember whose missionary zeal has led him from England towards Persia since Martin's death, was Mr. Groves. To labour in Persia was, I believe, his original design, although he went beyond it into Turkey. This eminently distinguished layman sacrificed country, fortune, and friends, to his ardent desire for unfurling the banner of the Cross, and preaching Christ crucified to the poor Mahomedans. But zeal, indiscreet zeal, may waste its odours even when it proceeds from the purest motive, and on this account one grieves to see an individual spending and being spent where no good results have been, nor are ever likely to be seen. Instead of grounding himself in the language, which he ought to have done in England—instead of associating himself with some particular church, be it either within or without the national establishment—he went into the wilds of Mahomedanism, where the natives esteemed him to be a wandering dervish, instead of a respectable moolah or sheik, which title would have commanded for him immediate respect.

With an ignorant people, rank in life goes a great way, and although we know that to be a Christian priest it is not necessary to be clothed in canonicals, yet to be an effective advocate of the cause of Christ amongst the Moslems, he should have been of some order of the priesthood. This interesting cha-

racter (from an obstinacy of indiscretion, if I may use the term) has sacrificed a life of wearying and unproductive labour at Bagdad. His Journal from thence, instead of reporting spiritual progress amongst the Mahomedans, presents a tissue of sufferings and misfortunes to himself and his *dear* people, quite harrowing to the feelings, and partaking more of romance than reality. Where he may be now spending himself I know not, though I believe him to be labouring on Mahomedan soil.

CHAPTER XI.

KARADAGH.

This district of Persia has been but little visited by the Ferengees. I will, therefore, stroll over the surface more leisurely. Having made another visit to the Khan's village in our vagabondizing tour, where we had been complimented and pillaged, I began to get more acquainted with the Persian *finesse*, which, among themselves, means "neither to believe nor to be believed."

Duplicity is so deeply impressed upon the Persian character, that the greatest adept in it has the most honour. The game of conversation is kept up with an overwhelming politeness. Thus the master of the house tells his guest, that "he looks

as brilliant as the sun, and as placid as the moon;" to which he replies, "his ears are now regaled with the tones of the nightingale, and may the roses of happiness ever bloom in the garden of his destiny;" with other compliments quite untranslatable; and the thousand and one nothings come out of their mouths so glibly, and so unmeaningly, that they seem glad when it is over, and laugh at each other. On taking leave there is a great deal said about "zhamet." I was long ignorant of the meaning of this word, which implies by the visitor what a deal of trouble he has given; the other doubles it with "kali zhamet"—it is *he* that has given the trouble;—and so they go on bowing out each other with their "zhamets" innumerable.

It was in the month of June that we traversed this district. The way began through a fine country (for Persia), well watered, which occasioned a continuity of villages, seemingly all flourishing. At Overjon we rested the first evening, having pitched our tent in a beautiful orchard; and the approach to the village was remarkable from the high mountains which we had to cross, some of the ravines being filled with snow. I have the most vivid recollection of this day's ride; setting

out in a broiling sun, and then encountering an atmosphere below zero. Near the river we passed a small Koordish encampment; then the abrupt ascent of a very narrow pass led to this magnificent mountain scenery, reminding me much of the wilds of Koordistan. I thought I had never seen any daylight so singular; there was a sunny landscape on the extensive plains, looking warm and cheering, with little bright spots of villages here and there, man and beast from thence scarcely discernible.

The mountains over which we were travelling, were clothed partly with verdure, partly with snow. The wonder was how we got up; but it was exceeded by how we were to descend; which was always on the slide. The magnificence of Persian scenery consists in its seemingly boundless extent; the outline being piled up in every variety of mountain, but not rock. Both mind and body seem to expand at such scenes: you breathe freely; "the world is all before you, where to choose" a boundless estate; you inhale the air of prodigal freedom, never to be felt in an enclosed country—'tis a sort of aërial feeling.

I had unknowingly preceded my party, and had

just exclaimed, "Oh let me gaze, of gazing there's no end!" when I was surprised by a host of villagers on horseback, Hadji Cossim Khan's family being coming from the district to which I was tending. The *cortège* consisted of many fair haremites and female slaves, preceded by the faroshs clearing the way, and looking with most jealous eye lest any one might glance at the ladies covered with shawls. The Persian vigilance, in this respect, is never relaxed, and a breach of good manners by any attempt to invade it might prove very dangerous to the traveller.

They seemed surprised to see a Ferengee stranger in these wild passes quite alone. The Khan, seeing our party in the distance, galloped off to greet them. His horses were richly caparisoned; his suite numerous; and I deemed this one of the most sumptuous Persian turns-out that I had yet seen (royalty excepted). These chiefs in Persia, when very remote from the seat of government, live in great state; they exercise absolute sovereignty over their dependents, and will sometimes defy the exactions of the Shah himself when they deem them exorbitant.

Seated on the green sward of a pretty orchard,

at Overjon, the interesting arrangements of carpetting, camping, haltering, &c. went on. We had made a toilsome march of it this day; the beasts were tired; and finding ourselves so agreeably encamped, we tarried the following day at this village, and promenading about, as was my wont, whip in hand, dog hunting (or rather dog fearing), I suddenly came on a party of women, washing their linen in the running stream. Up they started with one general "whallah;" and planting themselves against the wall face in hand, there they stood, a most picturesque group of moving rags, unslippered, but all veiled. I dreaded an *emeute*, of the dogs at least.

I have already noticed this strong national custom of female modesty—if it may be so called—in Persia, amongst the better classes; that it should extend to the *canaille* is remarkable. I never saw any national prejudice so strong. I had frequent subsequent confirmations of this when coming suddenly into a village, and surprising women under similar circumstances; their consternation was excessive; helter-skelter they ran, hiding their faces in their hands, whilst the nether garments had some of them escaped, it being windy weather.

R. J. Esmerton

Day & Haghe Lith.r to the Queen

THE AUTHOR SURPRISING THE PERSIAN VILLAGERS AT OVERJON.

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The next morning, at six o'clock, we crossed the Hadji river, reputed to be salt water. Sitting down on its banks, we converted some of it into tea; nor did it vitiate the souchong at all, that I remember. It was now no longer the arid land of Persia; water was gushing from the soil in various directions; and we had many a fording difficulty this day, particularly with the baggage-horses. This is always an affair of some little interest. The "charwarder" has to dash into the stream first, to sound the depths, &c. and if he succeeds the rest of the party follow. Sometimes he has to swim for it, and then other soundings must be made; then the "yaboo" becomes obstinate; he sticks in the mud, or will lay down with the load on his back. It is always an interesting affair, and some little anxiety is felt to get it well over.

Pursuing our way, on attaining the summit of the hill, looking down into the little village of Herries, I was enchanted with the peaked mountains, the extensive plains—all mute and motionless. "Here will I dwell," said I to the Khan, "and become Ketkodeh of Herries." Persian

like, permission was immediately granted; and I had only to take possession. But on the nearer approach it savoured of ruins, and on entering it I found nothing else. The Khan laughed, and bid me joy of my possession. A wild garden springing up here and there amidst the crumbling mud walls, bespoke rich vegetation; and the water was abundant. The blight of oppression had sunk this once flourishing place almost into the very soil from whence it sprung.

Amidst the remains we breakfasted, there being a few squalid inhabitants, who furnished us with "moss," or sour milk, a most excellent beverage, beside good pancake-bread, butter, fruits, &c. Even in these village remains lay Persian duplicity; I mean in the concealed abundance of every provision. Had the Mehmandar been coming with his "sadir," or royal order to feed all his followers, there would have been plenty of sticks, but no bread; but only show them the "siller," which is more potent with them than even the firman of the "King of Kings," there is nothing wanting. The poor natives, ground down by oppression, are obliged to be deceptive and treacherous; it is dic-

'tated to them by the law of self-preservation, which is stronger than any dictum even of "his most despotic Majesty."

We went on in a much wilder country than any I had yet visited; the ravines and mountains we had encountered before were nothing compared to these cloud-capped eminences. The horses snorted as they went up, and trembled as they came down.

Even in these wilds there were occasional encampments of the savage-looking Koords, under their black tents, wherever a patch of pasture could be found. These people know nothing about rent or taxes; happily disencumbered from the trammels of refined life, they despise its impositions. But the "chadre," or veil, was not forgotten. One fair shepherdess, when tending her flock, was very assiduous with her rags, which seemed rather disposed to coquet with her charms, by means of chinks here and there discoverable. But by putting my hand to my eyes (as a sort of assurance that I could see nothing), her modesty was spared.

At such places we always kept together in a sort of battle array, arms primed, and looking as fierce as possible to all intruders; any loiterer being

liable to be cut off. The Khan's vigilant eye associated the party in close phalanx. Thus we moved on over hill, over dale, ascending and descending frighful precipices. Here we met, in a very narrow pass, troops of Koords, or a moving village; every animal put in requisition, from a donkey to a bullock, laden with tents and kettles, children and chickens, slung in baskets; such a *melange* as was never seen in Europe I will venture to say, with their flocks and herds, horses and camels. The whole village was in motion, the men looking grimly wild; the women, under their tattered garb, striving to keep up amidst rags and penury the Mahomedan "shame-facedness" so peculiar to this people. They are shepherds by hereditary occupation, and plunderers from cupidity.

The spring of the year is hailed with delight by this nomadic race, when I have seen them emigrating from pasture to pasture. They retain their primitive pastoral habits, which the vicissitudes of ages have never eradicated. These nomades of the wilderness seem devoid of all local attachments; their wants are few; they appear contented and happy.

The tribe amongst whom we were moving were

notorious horse-stealers; they would even come down to Tabreez, rob the stables, and take the cattle into these mountains, where it is almost impossible to follow them; in their fastnesses they are inaccessible.

At length we arrived at a height where all semblance of a road ceased, to the great embarrassment of our guide. Not a trace of animal or village could be made; the ground being partially covered with snow, and otherwise of that barren description where "thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockles instead of barley." What was to be done? But there is an inexhaustible resource in Persian travel—the inviting "tchibook,"—so squatting ourselves on the ground, we puffed many a cloud, and held council as to proceeding. Every point of the compass was alike; no clue whatever tended to the village which we were seeking; so, leaving it to the horses, we had not proceeded far when some shepherds were seen in the distance, and they pointed to some almost inaccessible ravines which must be passed before we could reach the village of Bahool.

All description must fail of the remainder of

this day's journey; it was icy cold in the month of June; the clouds played at our feet:—

> " ——— Clouds in heaven's loom,
> Wrought through varieties of shape and hue,
> In ample folds of drapery divine."

And as we passed through these magnificent folds, I felt the most thrilling sensations of delight.

As we trod our rugged way, the snow was in some places so thickly embedded, that it was difficult and dangerous for the baggage horses to proceed. A brilliant sunshine below (for in those heights we were quite obscured from its influence) would occasionally light up a bridle-path, where the goat was browsing. We slid over rocky chasms at which the horses revolted; and scanned our way on the brinks of precipices gaping awfully below, to which one false step might prove the last. As I trod my slippery way, I would occasionally pause on some nook,—

> " To gaze and gaze, and wonder at the scene."

I thought our dangers and difficulties amply repaid by the imposing view of this mountain scenery. Sublimity sat on its summits—grandeur and beauty in its vales; and the variety of shades

scattered upon the whole made it look more like a picture than a reality.

But why do I compare art to nature! I,

> "Who have been accustomed to entwine
> My thoughts with nature rather in the fields,
> Than art in galleries ——."

I was almost drunk with its magnificence, and staggered down our harassing way, quite unknowing to what it would lead. There was an imposing awe in the solitude. If ever I felt out of the world, it was here. No tenant would inhabit it; from the eagle to the goat it was all deserted.

We scrambled on, making towards a sun-lit valley, which we imagined might be occupied by the flock and its shepherd; and it was so. They were feeding in rich pastures, to which we descended, where we got into almost tropical heat. I have before noticed the extraordinary and rapid changes of climate in Persia. In a few hours we had experienced this to as much as thirty degrees.

Here we learnt how much we had deviated from the proper road; and having taken temporary rest, and obtained information of a Koordish encampment, we sped our way to it, where we

were refreshed with "moss," or sour milk, dealt out to us very liberally, spite of the jealousy of the dogs, who seemed very angry at our intrusion. These nomades are always hospitable; ask for their salt, and they are sure to grant it you, which includes protection to a certain extent, beyond which they plunder you if they can.

We were not long in descending to our village of Bahool, where we found our tents pitched in a pretty orchard, the servants having preceded us the day before This wretched village was situated near what the natives call a "jangall," or forest, although it offered a mere brushwood of stunted oak. Immediately around it were certainly a few trees of the birch kind, but late in their vegetation; but even these were to me a great novelty, having travelled so far without seeing a tree of any sort, garden wood excepted. Here we enjoyed our rest—

> "All on the margin of a foaming stream,
> And spread our careless limbs ——"

and smoked our tchibook of repose.

Having rested at this village some sixteen days,-

I had much enjoyment of the nomadic life; and as I plunged farther into the forest, its magnificence expanded, and opened new pages of nature's beauties. I explored the gardens, got acquainted with the natives, propitiated the dogs, and really felt so happy in this wilderness, that I was loath to leave it.

I deem the Persian peasantry a very happy people (when under a liberal governor), because they are a contented people. The more they are isolated from any large town or government, the more is there of simplicity of mind, consequently less corruption of manners. Amongst them, any thing like *want*, much less of *starvation*, can never be known. I have already spoken of the abundance of a Persian village breakfast. They have "moss," or sour milk, which they are very fond of; an abundance of flat bread, which is soft and unleavened; with butter, cheese, honey, fruits in the season, eggs and fowls, rice and tobacco. They are never degraded by that stimulating demon, alcohol; nor is their soil polluted by the demoralizing gin-shops, — those sinks of iniquity, those reservoirs of shame and death,

which so degrade my native country, heating the mechanic almost into rebellion; rendering him, instead of a portion of the healthy strength, the noxious excrescence of his country. * From this the Persian peasant is exempt.

But they are not without their grievances. The occasional oppression of their local governors I have already alluded to; and another calamity, with which they are sometimes visited, withers their substance, desolates their land, and often drives them from their locality. I allude to the locusts, showers of which will occasionally visit the land. Whilst at dinner one day on the top of the house at Tehran, a small quantity of them dropped on our plates, attracted no doubt by the lights. I once met with them on the road to Kirishkeen; the natives were horrified at their approach, and took every means to frighten them

* The "temperance," and even "total abstinence" system is stealthily as it were making its way in this country, conferring a blessing on the community second only to "the Gospel of Peace." It is astonishing the progress it has made in Ireland under the influence of Father Matthew. Let us compete with the Mahomedans in this respect, and banish the demon alcohol from our soil.

off by "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." They resemble the grasshopper in size and shape; they are heavy on the wing, and soon fall to the ground, where they lay in seeming helplessness. I am not aware whether they are of that species which at the command of Moses so desolated Egypt; but they move occasionally in immense bodies, seemingly led by the king or queen of the tribe. They travel long journeys, and are generally brought in with a south-east wind. Their eggs being deposited in the autumn, are warmed into life by the sun.

The locusts which I saw were about three inches long, of a bright yellow colour. It is said that some of the people gather them for food; that they are good eating when boiled, and that they are even preserved by salting. I was by no means curious to taste of this spawn of nature, particularly with such an abundance of other food.

I had many a solitary meandering in these wilds. The river jumped down in foamy haste, in this Alpine scenery; there was only the sea wanting to complete Byron's description,

which I have so often entered into, and so truly felt:—

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, nor yet can all conceal."

CHAPTER XII.

THE "IMARET KHORSHEED."

It was deemed a wonderful favour to be allowed to see this "Palace of the Sun," of which, with its numerous groves and fountains, flowers and shrubs, I had heard quite an oriental description, which had "tickled the imagination and opened the door of curiosity."

The buildings stood in different detached courts, and were all of mud, having the usual flat roof. The first hall, into which I was introduced by one of the court Khans, was the throne-room, from which his Majesty occasionally "sheds the light of his countenance on the dust of the earth." It was large and lofty, having recesses at each end,

on the walls of which were some displays of the Persian arts, in the way of painting. One of them was a battle-piece, the subject of which I could not learn. His Majesty was the most conspicuous figure in it, carrying all before him. In the galleries I noticed some figures of Ferengee males and females; I was told that they represented the earliest British envoys to Persia.

The walls were lined with marble and arabesque ornaments curiously inlaid; the ceiling partook of the same taste, all glittering with Asiatic finery. The front was open, and supported by two columns of black marble, about thirty feet high, in solid pieces, with a wreath around them, curiously cut. These were deemed great curiosities. On looking around on this oriental magnificence, which the Persians esteem to be "the wonder of the world," the servants (and they were numerous) were anxiously waiting to hear my exclamations of astonishment and delight.

Having trod my barefoot way, and expended all my Persian terms of admiration, I next examined the "takht," or throne, which was a moveable square platform, huge and unshapely. It stood about three feet from the ground, ascended by as

many steps. It was all of marble, of very fine grain; the carving was curious, but many of the figures unmeaning. It was abundantly ornamented with inscriptions, and beautifully inlaid with the Arabic character. In the centre was a small tube, or *jet d'eau,* which was supplied from a fountain in a recess of the room, and was deemed a very curious display of hydraulics by the Persians. The farther end of it was raised a little above the ordinary level. This was the imperial seat. The whole is carpetted and adorned with small ivory images when his Majesty is seated.

I was strongly tempted to take temporary possession of the Shah's throne, once the seat of Agha Mahmoud Koja, the terror of Persia. As a mark of special favour, I was allowed to occupy, for a short time, the "takht" of the "Shah Padi Shah," the "Centre of the Universe," &c. It caused me no trepidation to mount the steps of empire, since I had been familiar with other thrones, and I fearlessly squatted myself on the same spot which the royal loins had shortly before occupied. No cannons "bruited it to the heavens;" no slave hung upon my nod; but I found it a hard, comfortless seat, very incompatible with any thing like

ease. Had I "let loose the flood-gates of imagination, and stood on the tip-toe of power," I could have decreed "Off with his head!" and thus have played the monarch to the full tune of oriental despotism. One thing I was assured of, that I was the first "ferengee" who had ever occupied the throne of Persia.

The second room was called "outough almas," from the crystal ornaments being formed diamond fashion, with which it is entirely covered. To this you ascend by a flight of awkward steps from another court. It has likewise a large open front, supported by pillars of wood, curiously painted; and similar recesses and galleries to the throne-room. The walls have some immense mirrors, and two large chandeliers are suspended, the whole being English. The glass is empannelled in very curious shapes, with enamelled borders, and painted ornaments of birds, roses, &c., in every variety of that oriental imagery in which the Persian imagination delights to revel; presenting altogether a blaze of mirror not unworthy the fervid description of the "Thousand and One Nights." The carpet was good; the "nummeds" thick, but moth-eaten; and as ma-

jesty himself sports nothing beyond this in the way of furniture, it leaves me but little to remark upon.

The Khan led me to the Gulistan, or "the Garden of Roses," of which we hear so much in Persia, with its bubbling fountains, and flowering shrubs. Here was to be seen every thing that could enchant—"the sweet-scented rose that had never looked upon dust; the spring that had never been vexed by a cold blast." This is the Paradise where "the nightingales warbled their enchanting notes, and rent the thin veils of the rose-bud and the rose." But I must have done with oriental imagery, or I shall never get through this enchanting spot, whose numerous tanks and streams of water gave it a most refreshing coolness. The plantations of roses were in full bloom, yielding to the air a delicious fragrance. I could almost realise the poet's feelings, "that it intoxicated the senses and made the heart drunk." Here I must do justice to the taste and ingenuity of the Persians, of which the Gulistan was certainly a magnificent display.

From the "bauleh kaneh," or window, which is very large, having openings both ways, did his

Majesty generally give audience to the envoys and courtiers below, who were kept some eight or ten feet from the window. The "bauleh kaneh" itself had nothing particularly attractive in it, the ornaments being very similar to those of the last room; but the carpets were better.

I now passed on to the "outough hyenah," or "room of mirrors," which is entirely covered with glass, including the ceiling. This was principally, I understood, from Russia, having that lustreless hue for which Russian glass is so distinguished. The chandeliers were English, and some of "Blade's best."

Then we proceeded to room the fourth, or "outough bulbul," the ornaments of which were of marble; but from its being filled with the presents sent from Russia by the late emperor, I had but little scope for observation. The China vases, the bronze ornaments, the dingy cut-glass, the table and tea services; these formed a part of the sundries, piled up in unceremonious heaps in this room. But amongst them was a great curiosity, of Russian fabric, an elephant of solid gold, about twelve inches long, having a dial-plate in front; this, with its tail and tusks, being moved by the

same machinery. I had heard of it at Petersburgh as an extraordinary effort of Russian art; but it was not thought much of, seemingly, by the Persian monarch, since all these things were jumbled together as mere lumber.

In the same court stands a small octagon room, called the "kuleh ferengee." It is composed principally of marble, and has two tanks of water in it, looking more like baths than any thing else. The windows were curiously carved, and some tablets of excellent Persian writing were exhibited on the walls.

I next passed on to an old building, where stands a curious structure, composed of sandal wood, sent to his Majesty from India, who used sometimes to occupy it when drawn into the court, as it was built upon wheels.

Playing the Paul Pry in all directions, I arrived at a large court, surrounded by buildings not yet finished, called the "Aumeneh Tauj," a fancy of the Tauj u Doulut, for a winter residence. It was in a very unfinished state, and was divided into a great number of small rooms, in rich variety of glass, marble, and tesselated pavements. A large marble "takht," or sleeping-place, stands in

the centre of the court; and here, under heaven's canopy, the monarch of Iran sometimes reposed himself. This out-door-sleep custom in the East is agreeably refreshing, and perfectly safe in a climate which has no night humidity.

A large building in another court attracted my attention; and here, as I was bending my way, "Sabre koon," "Stop," said the Khan, "it is the royal harem." And here (pausing at the threshold) lie the bones of several of the inveterate enemies of Agha Mahomed Shah, whose savage resentment was no otherwise to be gratified than by trampling over their bones daily. This savoured somewhat of that oriental barbarism with which Persian history so much abounds. *

I then proceeded to the royal stud, which is adjoining. About three hundred horses were tied to stakes in the court yard, for the benefit of air, and, it may be said, of exercise, since they had some length of rope. The oriental custom is, to fasten the heels together with large cotton ties, to

* It is stated as a fact, that this tyrant, on coming into Khorasson as conqueror, ordered the bones of Nadir Shah and his son to be disinterred, and carried to Tehran, and that they were buried at this doorway. What a singular thirst for revenge is this, scarcely to be comprehended by the European mind.

prevent their kicking; and in this way they are always picketted on a journey. The Turkoman horses principally prevailed,—a bony, powerful animal, with more strength than grace of action; more of the roadster than the courser. There were only a few Arabs. I have seen much finer animals in England; and I apply this remark to Persian horses generally. If that barbarous custom were abolished of cutting the tail, which so disfigures an English horse, he would find no competitor in Persia. "What is the extent of his Majesty's stud?" I enquired. "He has four thousand mares in one district, and horses sufficient to mount an army."

This then is the famous "Imaret Khorsheed," or "Palace of the Sun," whose principal features are monotony, simplicity, and unostentation; and here sits on the ground, and sleeps on the ground, the "Asylum of the Universe," a monarch of fancied grandeur far superior to the occupant of Windsor Castle, the Hermitage, or the Tuileries. If I were to make comparisons, I would say that the Autocrat of all the Russias would scarcely here lodge his gentleman usher.

I asked to see the glass bed and the shawl carpet,

but these were in the "andaroon." The former was included in the presents of the late Emperor of Russia! The idea of "his most despotic majesty" reposing on crystal!—Beds of roses (literally so) are not uncommon in Persia, but to me they would prove beds of thorns; for I have found the odour so powerful, as to conduce to any thing but repose.

Taking leave of the Khan with all the "zhamets" that I was master of, (that is, apologising for the great trouble which I had given him), I had to wend my way through the bazaars, to the great "maidan," or square, into which some of the palace windows open. In one corner of it was a tower of observation, from which his Majesty is supposed to witness the different executions. In this square was a tolerable show of artillery, the "topanches," or gunners, being about, and the "tuffenkchees," or infantry, guarding the different gates and avenues. The whole of these buildings are within the "ark," or citadel, which is very extensive, surrounded by mud walls and a dry ditch, having sundry drawbridges, &c. I am quite unable to speak of its extent, though I lodged within it at my first visit to Tehran, but was always lost in

its intricacies. The various avenues in it, and approaches to it, are tortuous; one may spend days there, and never find one's way about. Every thing reminds you of contrivances against surprise, as though treachery were stalking about, and all means taken to prevent it. The entrances have all three or four door ways, always puzzling one which to take.

The bazaars were of the most tumble-down description, and very inferior to those at Tabreez; and what makes them so crowded and disagreeable is, that they become the thoroughfare from one part of the city to another. Any description of their motley occupants I will not attempt. To go through them on horseback, it is necessary to have the "faroshes" to clear the way—to put aside a string of mules, donkeys laden with brushwood, the chaunting dervish, or the importunate fakeer; the way being so narrow that it becomes densely choked, and the loud "kebardar" "take care," being shouted in all directions. It is quite an indescribable scene.

The "hummums," or baths, are numerous and good; these are the constant resort of the Persians. The Asiatics are very clean in this respect; and

not to go to the bath once a week, would be deemed almost a dereliction of duty. Here the toe and finger nails of the fair "shireen" are stained with the "hennah," or red dye, of which they are very proud. The Khan has his beard stained with "rang," or the black dye, which is beautiful in lustre, and will last some weeks. The luxury of the bath is very great in these warm climates, and the shampooing operation grateful when over, though I was very restive under it, and made the vault resound at my ticklings.

There are no remarkable buildings in this city of Tehran to claim attention. Some of the domes of the mosques are imposing from their size and bulb shape; but neither in the bazaars nor in the mosques, is there any thing to be compared with such buildings at Constantinople. These mud regions present a mass of low, flat-roofed dwellings, of one uniform hue and height. All the luxuries are within the spacious courts, the running streams, the blooming flowers, and bubbling fountains, of which the Persians are very ingenious in the display. The best house which I saw at Tehran was the British residence, standing in a large garden, prettily laid out, and abounding with fruits and

flowers; there were also extensive gardens behind, in which I took my daily walk. Our envoy had much improved his house by a good front of pillars and pediments, giving it quite a West-end appearance. He quite surprised the Tehranis, who, comparing it with their own mud hovels, would exclaim—"Barikallah"—"Mashallah!"—"Excellent—well done!"

That deeply-rooted and inveterate custom in my native country, of four-post bedsteads, down pillows and well-stuffed mattresses, is unknown in Persia. I query if there be in Tehran more than one machine of this sort—that belonging to the British Elchee. On the same spot of ground, the Persian squats, prays, and sleeps; the nummed of the day is removed for the nummed of the night, which is very simple, being somewhat thicker: this, with a pillow and coverlet, form their place of repose.

On my arrival in this city, "Where am I to sleep?" was my first demand, having been awoke out of my nap as I lay outside the gate, at the threshold, being fatigued with my night's travel, and arriving before the said gates were opened. But the lodging-places I found to be of the most

miscellaneous description. "Throw yourself on the ground wherever you please," was the order of the day, and in conformity with the general custom, I found the roof of the house to be the most agreeable berth; the roofs, as I have observed, being flat, and generally on the same level. It is here that the evening society of Tehran congregate, and it is amusing to witness what may be seen at a great distance—the various groups, sometimes of whole families, making their night arrangements—spreading carpets, planting bolsters, and laying themselves in all directions to cultivate sleep.

Nor should I forget their "numaz," or evening prayers: the prostrations, genuflexions, and salutations of so many people, whilst the "muzzins" are inviting them from the tops of the mosques, add much to the grotesqueness of the scene.

When it was over, I perambulated my boundaries, and took a peep at my neighbours, who were merely divided off by a low balustrade—in this way only intrusions being guarded against. I, quite unintending to do so, was going rather beyond my boundaries, when up sprang a batch of females,—"Ferengee ame dast"—"the Ferengee is coming;" they waited for no apologies on my

part, but off they ran, and off ran I too, determined for the future to "open wide the portals of prudence, and to close the avenues of indiscretion."

Although I like this independent mode of sleeping wherever momentary convenience may dictate, still it has sometimes its inconveniences, which I have experienced. I was one night awoke by the pattering of some drops on my coverlet, which was any thing but water-proof; a smart shower (a most unusual thing in Persia) was disturbing all the inhabitants of Tehran. Up they sprang with bolsters and carpets in hasty confusion, and I heard a Babel of sounds relative to their new arrangements, but was too much occupied with my own to attend to my neighbours. I made hasty retreat within the threshold, where I made out the night, the servant laying at my feet.

CHAPTER XIII.

NIGHT TRAVEL IN PERSIA.

THERE is something very romantic in stealing through a wild country as it were by night. Having made five stations from Tehran, as far as Kirishkeen, it was deemed more prudent to obscure than to expose ourselves in this immediate neighbourhood. The road had been previously marked with rocky passes and tortuous ravines, which nature seems to have planted in Persia, as strongholds either of offence or defence between savage man. A road of this kind is therefore always deemed dangerous; and the prudent traveller, with his well-armed attendants, makes his cautious survey, that the pistols and

guns are in perfect readiness, in case of any sudden hostility.

It is amusing sometimes to witness the mutual caution of two parties coming towards each other, both on the defensive; the glittering of the fire-arms in the distance bespeaks a foe, although a friend; and warily approaching each other, instead of powder and shot they exchange the courteous "Salome," and "Alikom Salome."

Every one must go armed in this country. I was much amused in this wild district by our gholaum crying out that there were horsemen in the distance; immediately the priming and loading went on, and each person looked to his weapon of defence. On galloping towards our expected foes, they turned out to be a party of poor peasants on ass-back, who having been plundered the night before, at their village, were seeking either their cattle or the delinquents.

Some of these districts are occupied by the Eleauts, the nomades, or wandering tribes, living in their black tents, which are pitched according to pasture abundance. From these we kept aloof, fearing plague, dogs, and robbers. At one of their villages I had considerable difficulty

in gaining admittance. They had had sufficient taste of Russian invasion to loathe every one from that country, (indeed, I found this to be generally the case in Persia). They called me "Ruski," "Moscovite," "Pedersukteh," "Burn your fathers," and I know not what. The dogs were set at me, and I was not allowed to cross their threshold for some time. But an all-powerful argument in the shape of money prevailed—and what will not this do in Persia?

I found at the next station, Koramdereh, every thing to compensate for the incivilities of the last, —all Persian smiles and courtesies,—with their "Kush gelden,"—welcome—and "Bismillah," in proof of which they lay a lamb at your feet, and with a knife at its throat, its blood will be upon you, unless you avert the sacrifice.

But I must dwell a moment at this place, it being a large village, called the "happy valley." Richly wooded and watered, and embowered in its own groves, it had a very pretty effect from the neighbouring hills. It was on a Sunday morning, about ten o'clock, that I found my way into this village, heartily tired after a nine hours' march over a dry and thirsty soil, where there was little

or no water, and no other herbage than that "with which a mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom." Here I luxuriated in the little "bauleh kaneh," with an abundance which was a mockery to all appetite, of the finest fruits, &c. to my heart's content; my only fear was repletion.

The occasion of our night's travel was this: in the immediate neighbourhood, not long before, the Elchee's servants, who were conveying the envoy's baggage to Tehran, had been surprised in their camp by a party of marauders, who had carried off even their tents. Sir John Campbell immediately sent up a gholaum to Zenjan, to the Khan of that city, in whose district it occurred, to require instant redress for the insult offered to the British mission, and payment for the baggage stolen, stating the amount. These amounts are generally exaggerated by the servants, who are sometimes interested in the robbery, by giving information to the robbers. The Khan, in great alarm of being displaced from his government, pays the money; and then levys upon his subjects perhaps twice as much as he had to pay; and they levy upon whom

they can. Thus they make war upon each other, all in the way of trade.

To avoid being taxed to pay Sir John's losses, (alias robbed), it was deemed expedient to adopt the night travel from Koramdereh. Stealing away from this station at midnight, we had a difficult road to pursue, as through the narrow ravines and swampy way we crept on, afraid even of the bark of the village dogs. These swampy ways were occasioned by irrigating the rice and melon grounds, which made a night march rather difficult.

I had many a starlight lucubration; the magnificent galaxy in the "vast concave" of a Persian sky, I thought I had never seen exceeded. I seemed to see palaces and arches in the starry firmament, and so gorgeous in light as I approached, that frequently I could not persuade myself that they were visions. This was certainly to me one of the "thousand and one nights."

I recollect a similar delusion once in a midnight march in Russia. Castles and battlements sparkled before me—I was constantly arriving—never arrived. I would always fix on the brightest star to guide me, as it were, through the night. Keeping

it in my eye, it seemed to promise protection; nor did I ever lose it until the broad glare of day wiped it out of the firmament. Anxiously looking for the opening of the "eyelids of the morning," the disappointments were frequent, occasioned by the "subah kauzib," or "the false dawn," so peculiar to this country.

Thus wending along, like culprits on forbidden soil, the "hush of night" was sometimes interrupted by the wary dogs, or the wakeful chanticleer, so easily disturbed, as we came suddenly on the black tents of the Eleauts, by whom we were sometimes challenged on the way; then by the careless muleteer, who on his donkey was leading his string of mules, and chaunting away the metre of Saadi, or Ferdoosi, seemingly with great zest.

The Persian poets are so much esteemed by the natives, that even the lower orders are strongly imbued with them.

Nothing is more interesting at such time than to watch for the first gleam of day, and I would sometimes exclaim—

> ——————— "Look, the gentle day
> Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about,
> Dapples the rosy east with spots of grey."

But it was the flickering "false dawn" again, which

I could not but imagine as illustrative of the country through which I was travelling. These remarks apply generally to those midnight movements when at funereal pace we have to creep over a soil, every step of which may be treacherous; but of treachery found I none.

Arriving the next morning at Sultaniah, wé breakfasted in the tomb of Sultan Mahomed Khodabendeh,—horses and all. The dome of this tomb was nearly equal to that of St. Paul's. There it stood in solitary grandeur, amidst a crumbling village, the walls of which were fast blending with the soil whence they sprung. When looking at the seemingly poor decrepid natives, it always excited my astonishment how such splendid buildings, occasionally to be seen in Persia, could have been created there. I could have imagined it quite as easy to produce them by a rub of Aladdin's lamp.

In this extensive plain of Sultaniah his Majesty had a country palace for his accommodation, during the encampment of his troops, which generally took place every summer. The pasture is so abundant that an army of horses may fatten on it.

"I am your sacrifice," said the Ketkodeh, as we entered the village; however, the sacrifice of the

lamb was sufficient, and we were soon regaled with some "kiabobs" from its panting sides.

Pursuing our midnight travel from Sultaniah, the next station was Kush Kand, a very pretty village, so embowered in wood, and so richly watered, that it looked like a little oasis in the desert. There is something to me captivating in a Persian village, which I have never seen in any other; amidst the most barren sandy surface which this country generally presents, there springs up, smiling in its abundance, a small green spot on an arid map, offering its produce of honey and milk (but no wine); then, after a long and dreary ride, every limb aching on the saddle, suddenly to recline on the nummed of rest, and smoke the pipe of contentment, one chews the cud of pleasure beyond what I can describe.

The Turkish villages are generally so burrowed under the ground, that but for the stacks of corn and heaps of dried dung for fuel, which indicate habitancy, you may pass them unnoticed. The roofs being flat, and all covered with mud, the only sign of occupancy is a small raised aperture, for admission of light and the egress of smoke. On one occasion, when I had just arrived at

Diadin, and had sent Gul Mahmoud on the opposite side to seek some stable for repose, on his beckoning me across, I mounted as I thought a mound of earth, to make quick work of it, not two feet high. The horse began to plunge, his feet were amongst the rafters, and out ran the women and the dogs—"the sahib is coming through the roof." I produced such an *emeute* that the village was quite in an uproar, and I had great difficulty to disengage myself and my beast sound wind and limb. However, promising to pay all repairs, I was installed at length in a comfortable stable, from whence the chickens had been just ejected.

The Persian villages, on the contrary, have all the umbrageous character of fertility. The natives have generally a hungry, squalid appearance, which is rather kept up than disguised, simulation being a leading feature in the Persian character, the result, I imagine, of a despotic government, the genius of which is to depress all energy, to discourage industry, and to stultify the mental faculties.

Here I saw them treading out corn with the oxen. Almost every thing in Persia reminds me

of biblical customs. How very patriarchal is this! So also is their mode of taxation; they pay no rent for the soil, beyond that of a tenth of its produce. I marked the royal heap once or twice, which I thought fell very short of the competing heaps. However, this I left to his Majesty to find out. The most amicable division seemed to be made amongst the villagers themselves, where there are no enclosures nor boundaries to mark private property. It is brought into one common stock, which is enough for all. There can be no want in a country where the soil produces so abundantly by irrigation only. It comes the nearest to "a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny," to any that I have ever met with.

The natives, in the midst of so much abundance, seem to be negatively happy—a sort of stultification of faculties. I hear of no crime nor commotion amongst them, and they seem blessed with that negative enjoyment, the result of minds buried in the repose of ignorance. As I lay on the heap of corn at lazy length, smoking my pipe of meditation amongst the natives, Shakspeare's enquiry occurred to me:

"————What is man,
If his chief good, and market of his time
Is but to sleep and feed! a beast! no more.
Sure He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To rust in us unused."

But rust it does in the Persian villages, where prosperity depends much on the Khan of the district; as, if he be rapacious, they suffer much persecution—if liberal and just, they become flourishing and contented. To avoid the former, they will emigrate to another locality;—"the world is all before them where to choose;"—the mud walls are soon raised, and in a very short time they establish another village, whilst the crumbling remains of those which they have left bespeak tyranny and oppression.

The natives, although serfs to the Shah, are not transferable with the villages, as they are in Russia; they are in *nominal* slavery, without being *slaves*—I mean as property. It is true the Shah may swallow them alive, if he likes; but he never *does so*. The emigration of the natives is a cause of strife sometimes amongst the neighbouring Khans, since population produces wealth. Where the people are so few, as compared to the

extent of territory, they are tenacious of their subjects being inveigled away, although they have no power to prevent it. I attended once a court of pleas on this subject, than which nothing could be more amusing. The ragged groups—the vociferous defendants, when charged with stealing away—and their rejoinders of oppression and cruelty—it was a scene for an Hogarth. "What dirt have you been eating? make your face white if you can, you Haremzadeh," said the Khan. "I have eat dirt," says the fellow; then crouching before his chief, afraid of the bastinado, "My liver has become water, and my soul has withered up."

There is, too, that passiveness about them which is equally amusing, and the order to "give him the shoe," is as quietly received as it is promptly obeyed by the faroshes, who, taking off their iron-heel slipper, give him such a blow on the mouth as not only to cut short the argument, but sometimes to smash in the teeth of the arguer. This order of the court is pretty effective, and frequently ends the assize; but "turn up his heels" is deemed a still sounder argument.

Some of the villages are walled, and flanked with towers; and in the "chummun," or meadow

districts, where the pasture is rich and abundant, they drive out and bring back their numberless flocks and herds morning and evening, always housing them in the stables at night. They appear to have quite a personal attachment for the brute beasts—a sort of family compact. I recollect particularly at the village of Dubalabad, a very large and flourishing district, where we arrived rather late in the evening, just as the natives were housing their cattle—the lowing of the oxen—the bleating of the sheep—the noise of the dogs, as this army of animals made their march into it. It was a most pleasing rural scene —there was something patriarchal in it. I could fancy Laban and Rebecca, Isaac and Leah amongst the villagers. This is an invariable custom in Persia,—that of housing the cattle every evening. They durst not leave them exposed at night in an unenclosed country; they would be not only subject to stray, but to be abstracted by their neighbours. There can be no security where there are no laws, and no confidence but in caution.

Most of the villages have "menzils," or post-houses, for the traveller; and if he be of any importance, the Ketkodeh comes to pay him

a visit, followed by a motley train of villagers, in their rough garb of sheep-skin coats, and badly slippered (their rags are deemed a protection against spoliation and oppression), who advance by degrees to the Khan's mat, and welcome him with the "Kush guelden," but never presuming to sit without his invitation. Then, when the pipe is produced, and sometimes the coffee (but this latter is a most special favour), he seems to bask in the Khan's countenance, and entreats permission "to rub his forehead at his threshold."

The Persians are very abject; they take hold of the hem of your garment, and entreat permission to kiss the dust off your feet. Their civilities are overwhelming, their language fascinating; for who is there that does not like to be told, "My eyes are enlightened by seeing you?" But their creed is that of Saadi: "Truth is an excellent thing when it suits our purpose, but very inconvenient when otherwise." Slavery is their atmosphere; they despise all other government. I can easily understand this, since every class exercises the same despotism to their dependents. Had the Shah been in the village, the Khan would have been prostrating himself, and playing the same part as

the Ketkodeh was now performing towards *him;* and when he quits the Khan's presence, he acts the despot to those below him; and so the comedy goes on from one class to another, each content to become the slave, that he may in his turn play the monarch.

From Kush Kand to Nickpy is a short stage, where I arrived early in the morning; and the only accommodation I could find was a three-walled shelter, without any roof, which had been taken down for fire-wood by the troops passing that way. These are complete destructives, having full licence to help themselves wherever they come; which they do without mercy, having no regular pay. Being without commissariat or clothing stores, they may be deemed merely a marching rabble, kept together by dint of the bastinado; a host of locusts, wasting and destroying. The poor villagers fly from their approach as from the pestilence. They had completely sacked this village, and with difficulty did I find supplies from Nickpy to Sershem.

There is no country so abounds with ruins, perhaps, as Persia; partly occasioned by plague, partly by oppression; the mud walls soon melt

away into their native soil, there being no cement of any kind, nor straw to bind them. Here I met another "kafelah" of pilgrims, similar to the one already alluded to as the Meshedees, bearing the Mahomedan standard of the Crescent and the hand of Ali. Some of the females were seated in "kajawahs," a sort of panniers slung over the horse, just large enough to take a woman. They must be nicely poised, and the unequal weight is generally made up by a large stone. I need not say they are well covered over with a shawl or wrapper, according to the quality of the occupant. When I first saw these things, and had no idea of the panniers' contents, I enquired of the muleteer what he was conveying so carefully? "Zan ast Sahib." "A woman!" I exclaimed. Up starts the female, not only to my great astonishment, but nearly upsetting her companion on the other side.

I do love the vagabondising about in the Persian villages, which I have done for months at a time; and so fascinated was I with this rustic life, that I had a notion of becoming a Ketkodeh myself. This wish was somewhat cooled by what I saw at Sardaha, where his authority went for nothing in a trifling dispute amongst the natives; for an

object of but small value they came to broken heads and bloody strife. So earnest are the Persians in every thing that regards *pelf*, that the combatants fought furiously for a coin of small amount. The incident amused me. For money they have such an "itching palm," that it is dangerous to trust even confidential servants.

Still I liked to be amongst the Persians, and memory loves to dwell on my Asiatic travel. Sometimes breakfasting on a grassy knoll by the brook's side, the wallet is turned out for some cold rice of yesterday's meal, the village supplying bread and "moss" or sour milk—a most delicious beverage. I like this original mode of feeding; there is something so unaffected in partaking of such simple supplies; nature is sustained, not loaded with food. Sometimes with bridle in hand, the horse grazes at my feet, or presumes to dispute with me the grass which I occupy, whilst, at lazy length, I am smoking my pipe of ease. How superior all this to the artificial misnamed *luxuries* of life!—the servants in the distance greedily swallowing the remains of your meal; then girding on their pistols, adjusting the bridles, and giving notice of being ready to depart.

CHAPTER XIV.

PERSIAN AVARICE.

From the prince to the peasant the vice of avarice prevails to an eminent degree in Persia. Money is not only the great lever, but the very stamina of existence in this country; and the love of it is so engraved in the Persian character, as to amount to a perfect absorption of thoughts and ideas. I trace this to the despotic sway exercised by the sovereign over his subjects. The acquisition of riches may be deemed dangerous in Persia, and the victim is often marked out for spoliation, sometimes for death. The tenacity of keeping, and ingenuity in concealing money is remarkable amongst the Persians. I have seen

them clothed in rags; I have travelled with seeming mendicants, to whom I thought a pipe of tobacco to be a charity—the lining of his pack-saddle being at the time stuffed with ducats. I never saw any people in whom the love of money was so inherent. To overhear their conversations, it is all about "pul"—money; and it is astonishing to all enquirers from whence they draw their supplies, being, as they are, without gold or silver mines, and the balance of trade being so much against Persia, as to require horse-loads of ducats being sent by almost every Tatar to Constantinople. On my first arrival in Persia, there was a very alarming scarcity of gold, owing to the heavy contributions imposed by Russia as an indemnification for the late war, amounting to eight crores of tomauns, or about three millions sterling.

The governor of Maraga, Jaffier Kouli Khan, died during my stay at Tabreez, and was supposed to have possessed immense wealth. The custom of burying money in the ground is not unusual in Persia, and in this way it was reported that he had deposited large sums. Whilst on his death-mat, being informed that his remaining days could be but few, nothing could prevail upon him to

reveal the place of its interment. Some creditors, therefore, became clamorous, and he obtained a dispensation from the Ameer y Nizam, that he should die in peace from their importunities. His father had been known to have buried large sums of money twice, and on both occasions to have murdered the servant that accompanied him, to prevent disclosures. So decided was the public opinion that Jaffier Kouli Khan had large treasures deposited in the ground, that the government authorities commenced a search after his death, assisted by the Ameer himself. Long and fruitless was the search—nothing was found; his servants were bribed—were threatened, but with the same result; and at length were cruelly bastinadoed, in the hope that they would divulge that of which they knew nothing. What a system! the toils and anxieties which one man expends to acquire the "operant poison," another expends to consign it again to the bowels from whence it came.

Nothing touches the compassion of majesty so much as the sight of money; it is irresistible; it is money which raised him to the throne; it is money which keeps him there, it may be said; it

will purchase every thing within his gift, even life itself, of which many instances are related in Persian history. His late Majesty, Futtee Ali Shah, was very ingenious in extracting money from his subjects. Does the King want to build a palace—he dips into his subjects' pockets for the ways and means; does he mean to marry either of his sons—all "the pomp and circumstance" must be paid for by the people. In this way they almost curse the "sadir," as it is called, or public requisition, when proclained by the herald of despotism. Has he received some miraculous cure from the "hakeem bashi"—immediately he sends out to the villages to announce the miracle—"inshallah," help me to pay the doctor. Presently two or three thousand tomauns are collected; but only one-half goes to the doctor, the remainder finds its way into the royal treasury.

Ingenuity is tortured to feed the royal avarice, which will even extend so low that Majesty would make the rounds of the bazaars occasionally to see what he could pick up. "Very good cloth—the King would like a coat of this;" with profound humility at the honour, it is immediately delivered to the attendants. In this way

he sometimes levied contributions to a great extent.

Many amusing anecdotes are related by Sir John Malcolm, the best historian that we have of Persia, of the late Shah's ingenious contrivances for getting the money out of his subjects' pockets; amongst others, that he would sometimes challenge some of the Khans of the court to shoot at a mark for a certain sum, perhaps the amount of four or five hundred tomauns. Of course the royal honour can never be declined, and Majesty must have the first shot. He was reputed to be an excellent marksman; yet, lest he should fail, and so large a sum being at stake, some contrivance was necessary to put it beyond risk. The sheep is brought out at a great distance, its leg is tied with a long rope, held by one of the attendants in the confidence of the King, who is instructed the moment he fires to pull down the animal, as though it had dropped dead by the ball. The distance is too great for the Khans to be supposed to see the royal *ruse*, although every one is acquainted with it before he goes to the field. In this way Majesty has won many a wager from his Khans, delighted at the success of his wonderful stratagems.

But practices of a more disgraceful nature were sometimes resorted to, to replenish the royal coffers, and the contagious example infects not only the members of government, but extends to almost all classes of society; even traps of vice are laid to catch delinquents, that the vizier may profit by the penalties; of which many disgusting instances occurred during my being at Tehran. Intrigues, on a larger scale, emanate from the court: it is scarcely to be imagined what iniquities are planned, with a view to taxation.

The British residence was robbed during my stay in Persia, though not at the time occupied by the Elchee. An English colonel's lady was plundered of property to the value of two hundred tomauns. Complaints were immediately made to the Zelli Sultaun, the governor of Tehran, and to the Vizier, requesting that the thing might be enquired into, and the money paid; but nothing was done; and it was presumed that the Vizier had profited by the robbery.

Such is the fallen state of honour and principle amongst the Persians, that civil robbery is no crime; the end always justifies the means; so that money is obtained, no matter how. Inge-

nuity in this way is a merit. M——— Khan, the governor of Resht, being very rich, the King wanted to extract some money from him; but having no fair pretence for so doing, he hit upon the expedient of frightening him, as it were, out of his government, by saying he had been offered one hundred thousand tomauns by another Khan to instal him into it. "Be jan y Shah raust ast." By the soul of the King 'tis true. "I am your slave," said the Khan; "I am your sacrifice," and so he certainly was to this extent, being obliged to pay the money.

Another instance was related to me, and well authenticated. A Khan was dismissed from his government in Azerbijan by Abbas Meerza. He applied to the King, and offered him forty thousand tomauns to be reinstated in his government. "Barikallah," said his Majesty, "Besher Shah," by the King's head we will make his face white. A "rackum," or royal order, was promised for the Khan's reinstatement; the money was paid, and the "rackum" given. The Khan was so flattered with the King's condescension, that, to use his own metaphor, "he had drunk deep of the bowl of vanity, and as its contents passed over the

palate of exultation, they filled his heart with arrogance and his bowels with ambition." Mounting the stirrup of impatience, and vaulting into the saddle of hope, he presented his "rackum" to the prince. Who shall paint his astonishment when the prince refused to obey it! "Laullah a ilullah," said he, "There is no God but God," and then following it up with "foozoel," "ghoraumsang," fool, scoundrel, "Beru," be off; and he was threatened with the bastinado. Returning once more to the King, he complained bitterly of this treatment, and was only ridiculed as having any fault to find—the "rackum" had been granted according to promise, and it was for him to contend with the existing authorities. The prince was so exasperated at the Khan's application to the King, that he invited him back, with fair promises of remuneration, and then pillaged him of every thing he had, took away from him his villages, and sent him into exile.

Persian finances are much deranged in this way; they grant what is called a "huget" on a particular district. These are generally payable just after harvest time. If the bill cannot be paid in money, they pay it in corn or other produce.

This is a matter of arrangement between the debtor or creditor. Get what you can is the general order of the day where money is so scarce. The chancellor of the exchequer's budget must be of rather a miscelleneous description here, particularly of income. Instead of post-office, excise, tea, it is wheat and barley, straw and rice. I only know that his exchequer bills were at a terrible discount when I was at Tabreez, amounting almost to fifty per cent. The merchants will have nothing to do with them, since there is considerable danger in asking for payment. They will grant orders sometimes on the customs, and, perhaps, the farmer of the customs will accept it at long date. In the meanwhile he is removed, and the new comer recognises none of the obligations of his predecessors.

It is wonderful the labyrinth these people get into by their crooked ways, when a tenth part of the labour would suffice in the straight path. The remote parts of his Majesty's empire sometimes get into a very disorganised state, entirely respecting "the ways and means;" and they take such desperate measures to raise the said "ways and means" as are quite unknown in other parts

of the world. This occurred during my sojourn in Persia, at Bushire, where considerable wealth was accumulated, belonging to merchants and others, in the transit of goods from India. The resident merchants were known to be very rich, and these considerations offered a tempting bait to those who were stronger than they.

It is not an uncommon thing in this part of the country to find organised bands of plunderers, and in this affair they conducted themselves most systematically. A large party of them went down to Bushire; indeed, an irresistible force to any thing which the inhabitants could oppose to them. Individuals paraded the town, offering, for a certain sum, to certain rich people, protection for their property from the plunder *about to take place.* Some of them yielded to this exaction, and were actually so protected; whilst their less fortunate neighbours lost their *all.* A Jew stood out to make a very hard bargain; they asked him one hundred tomauns; he offered them twenty, and so on to fifty, but would go no farther; the consequence was, that he lost ultimately many thousands of tomauns. Bushire was literally *sacked.* Forty persons are said to have been killed, and

ninety persons wounded. Property to the amount of thirty lacs of rupees, or three hundred thousand pounds sterling, is said to have been carried off by a desperate and ferocious gang, gloating over their prey, although stained with so much blood.

It was said at the time that this gang had been organised by a prince of the blood, the governor of Shiraz; although he did not personally head it, he was its founder, and shared the produce of its infamy. Such was the *on-dit* of the day. Sir John Malcolm, in his Persian Sketches, tells of a certain Khan, who when he first viewed the wealth and extent of Calcutta, exclaimed, "What a fine place for plunder!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE "RAMAZAN."

THIS is the name of the ninth month of the Hegira, and is the Lent fast of the Persians. It was instituted thus by Mahomet:—"The month of Ramazan shall ye fast, in which the Koran was sent down from heaven, a declaration unto men, &c. God would make this an ease unto you, and would not make it a difficulty unto you, that ye may fulfil the number of days and glorify God, for that he hath directed you, and ye may give thanks." Its commencement (in February) was governed by the appearance of the new moon; the moment the brilliant crescent shows itself in the heavens, the gun fires, and the fast commences,

and lasts for forty days, from sun-rise to sun-set, which is always announced by the firing of a gun; when, even if the hand is in the pilaff, in a moment feeding is suspended.

The worshippers of Mahomet now flock to their mosques:—I hear the Muzzins calling the Azan from the roofs more distinctly than usual—"God is great, come to prayers, and ask forgiveness of your sins. I summon you with a clear voice." Seemingly, at this season, greater ardour prevails in all their religious services. I see the good Musselmans sitting about in the bazaars, and at the gates of the city, reading aloud their Koran, and sometimes the dervishes, with their striped conical caps, ornamented with passages from their scriptures; they are to be seen chaunting with the most holy fervour from that book, of which they boast that its influence has extended beyond the scriptures of the Messiah, and that now a hundred and forty millions of people acknowledge its sway, and are governed by its doctrines!

Really, it is astonishing to see the zeal which animates these people, literally "pressing forward" to their temples, and without any adventitious aid of Koran Societies, &c., to keep alive the flame of

religious love; but a sort of soul-absorbing interest, superseding all other interests. I have seen the merchant, in the midst of his worldly duties, draw the book from his pocket, elevate it to his forehead, then kiss it, and begin to read aloud, or to chaunt from its inspiring pages—no matter who is present. No false shame is felt at his being thus seen engaged with the Prophet; it is the breath of life to him; a good Musselman will tell you not only how many words but how many letters it contains.

Then again as to prayer, five times a day, whereever they may be, at noon or at sun-set, down they drop on their knees, and begin their prostrations and genuflexions, turning towards Mecca, kissing the carpet, and with the utmost humility proving themselves devoted to the service of the impostor.

I was rather taken by surprise at this on my first day in Persia, which was at Makoo.* We

* A large painting of the wonderful cave of Makoo, by Colonel Monteith, was exhibited at Somerset House in 1830. This immense cavern is said to be in breadth more than a thousand feet, and in depth about six hundred feet, sufficient, on an emergency, to harbour all the population of Makoo. The road to it was most difficult, by a sort of corkscrew ascent, on which I could scarcely keep my saddle. Most terrific mountains overhung it, giving it an air of romantic terror; these contained galleries accessible only by ropes, and here it was said the Khan's treasures were contained.

were invited by the Khan to dine with him, where I first heard the doleful sound of the Muzzin, without understanding it, and immediately down dropped the Khan on his knees, and began praying. He experienced frequent interruptions from his servants, &c., to which he would reply, and then pray on again. So he went on for half an hour, I drinking in the wine of astonishment all the time,—this being my first initiation to Mahomedan worship.

I have been often amused, when going round the walls of the city, to witness the groups of people watching the declining sun, half famished as it were, and actually suffering from want, at least of their darling tchibook; but nothing could induce them to transgress the commands of the Prophet.

The Armenians also have their fasts at this season; and I have been assured by those well conversant with the subject, that they not only carry it to the *threshold* of starvation, but *over* the threshold, and that they have even *died* under the penance! It were endless to narrate the numerous instances which came before me of Mahomedan zeal;—they taught me this humiliating truth, that

such is unknown to the followers of the Messiah in my own country; and I could not but reflect that Mahomedan zeal, with Christian faith, would build up such a religion as would adorn *his* temples, and trample idolatry in the dust.

"Oh, for a Christian faith, with Pagan zeal."

It is not uncommon for the Musselmans to get their Koran by heart! Where shall we find this among professing Christians with *their* Scriptures? It is astonishing to notice the difference between the cold calculating Protestant, who ekes out his religious duties with Sunday observances, merely to pacify his conscience, and the religious feeling intermixed with the customs of the Persians! Their Koran seems to be the only reigning *fashion* amongst them; it is their spiritual food; they enjoy it, they feed upon it; and so far as I can judge from their external duties, of charity and prayer, it is the very animus of their existence. Does the prince wear any ornaments on his person —they are called "amulets," or charms, principally of the cornelian stone, beautifully engraved with Koran inscriptions. Thus the doctrines and promises of the Prophet pervade all their institutions,

even in the minute details of domestic life. Does the Mahomedan summon you to dinner—it is with a "Bismillah," in "the name of God;" when he has done, it is with an "Alham, dulillah," "thanks to God;" does he contemplate a journey—it is with "Inshullah," "please God;" does he take leave—it is with "Khoda hafiz shuma," "may God take you to his holy protection;" and so on, literally fulfilling the Apostle's commands, "whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

When shall we see nominal Christians following this Mahomedan *fashion* (if I may so term it)? Prayer and praise a fashion! the Bible a fashion! when shall we see our armlets and bracelets adorned with Bible inscriptions of "rejoicing in hope," "patient in tribulation," &c. The Mahomedans would have more shame to have it known that they had *omitted* prayer, than the professed Christian would that he had daily performed this duty; and as to their sabbaths, they begin them on the previous evening; and so far from any exclamation with them, "what a weariness it is; when will the sabbath be over, that we may set forth corn and sell wheat;" on the contrary, they are eagerly

pressing forward to enjoy its privileges. Here the moolahs are in the market-places, praying amongst the people, and testifying from their scriptures—"there is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet."

This is particularly the case at this season of the Ramazan. I have been often stopped in the bazaars by the crowds of people, flocking towards the mosques, at the cry of the muzzins. I had many a difficult question to answer Hadji, who was curious to know as to our Ramazan customs in England. "What, eat and drink all day!" said he; "no morning prayers, no church going! and this is your boasted religion which is to overflow a world!" and he scorned me with the term Ghiaour, which is the reproach in this country, where

> To be a Christian and the name of Christ,
> Is an abomination."

It may be objected that to introduce religion into the ordinary concerns of life, would clog their operations, and that it cannot be associated with this world's engagements. But in the mirror of travel I have seen the contrary. It appears to me that religious duties might and should be the primary work

of all men. This is evidenced before me in the Mahomedans. Does the sovereign preside over the destinies of the empire with less zeal and vigour for having first implored the blessing of the "King of kings," whose vicegerent he is? Does the statesman come to the council board with less power of intellect for having first enquired of the Ruler of all things whether they should go up to Ramoth Gilead or forbear?* Does the captain of the host go forward with less assurance of victory for having implored the aid of the God of battles? I might extend the enquiry to the lawyer at the bar, the merchant in the counting-house, or the mechanic at his bench. I would say with the Mahomedans, let religion pervade every profession and pursuit in life; it will strengthen, invigorate, and purify the mind.

I must confess that I felt "shame burn my cheek to cinder," at being twitted by a Mahomedan with our cold, frigid, Protestant worship, as compared with their animating zeal, which at this season of the Ramazan was so moving the followers of Ma-

* The only blessing which I remember being invoked on the national councils (independent of the Liturgy) is on that of the meetings of parliament.

homet. I find, too, that in the Greek church religious observances are mixed up with all their institutions, civil and political; the armies never march except headed by the priest. I recollect once attending the Russian camp at Erzroume, at a grand fête, on account of some victories of General Paskevitch: the priest headed the ranks, and publicly gave thanks to the God of battles; the soldiers, bareheaded, responded with their Hallelujahs, and the whole army joined in the Te Deum of thanksgiving. I never heard a service more impressive; and instead of the noisy ebullitions of a riotous soldiery, they had converted their camp into a cathedral—their shouts into praises.

The zeal of the Mahomedans is further evinced in erecting temples to their God. As I lay on my mat in the caravansery at Kazvine, I had opportunity to watch my neighbours: a water-melon, some rice, and "kiabobs," roasted sausages, formed the daily repasts of some of the wealthiest merchants in Persia; but their ambition was expended on a large mosque, which they were building to the glory of their prophet; I saw it in its incipient state, with fine promise of a splendid structure. They contented themselves with the necessaries of

life, in order to nourish their religion with their wealth.

The bazaars at this season of the Ramazan* are dressed up with peculiar gaiety, and abound with fruits, "gezenjibin," or manna, and a variety of candied mixtures, rather indigestible. The fast is succeeded by a feast; many people eat by night and sleep by day; the abstinence of the morning is amply made up by the feed of the evening.

* This is the season of our Ramazan or Lent, which in all countries is so respected, except in England. I have mixed with almost every sect, and acquainted myself with their creeds, from the Ghebre to the Moslem, with all of whom this fast is a prominent feature—and what do I find in my own country? It is true the churches are opened, but do I see the people flocking to them, like the Mahomedans to their mosques! Where is their practice of charity, self-denial, coming out from the world, &c.; and are the commands of the Messiah so rigidly observed as are those of the Prophet amongst his people? The legislature once interfered to close the portals of dissipation during the passion week; the same power has opened them again to masquings and revellings, at which the Moslems would revolt at any season. Furthermore, a member of the same legislature once proposed to desecrate the Sabbath to the level of other days! The moolahs would have proscribed him from the mosques.

CHAPTER XVI.

MAHOMEDAN VENGEANCE.

DURING my stay in Persia, that awful event took place at Tehran, of massacring the Russian ambassador, M. Grybydoff, and all his suite, (saving M. Maltzoff, a secretary, and three Cossacks,) being thirty-nine in number. The Persian history scarcely presents so barbarous an outrage on humanity; nor need I narrate the circumstances, which were soon after so ably set forth in "Blackwood's Magazine." It was a storm of fanatic fury, raised by the moolahs, which swept away these devoted victims. Islamism was said to be in danger; the Ghiaours had insulted their religion, and never was the fury of the Persian

populace supposed to have been so excited as by those provocations offered by the Russians. The government had no power to check the sanguinary impetuosity of the mob—they did their utmost.

There can be no doubt that the Russian ambassador brought upon himself this heavy judgment, principally, I believe, occasioned by wicked servants around him. Yet this cannot be offered as an excuse for one of the most horrid and barbarous tragedies ever committed in any nation, on those who claimed its hospitality and protection.

The Shah immediately sent a letter to Abbas Meerza, detailing the events, and requiring his assistance. Having procured copies and translations of this, and of other royal letters on the subject, they may be deemed interesting, since they have never appeared in print, and are strictly from the Persian documents now in my possession.

From Ali Shah, dated 5th Sharbon (1st March, 1829).

"The condition of bleeding hearts who can tell! your feelings will participate with mine. This courier I send by the express orders of his Majesty, which if I do communicate to you, how

can I anticipate your sorrow and grief; if I do not I am in peril of the King's command. What I am desired to do I am bound to perform. The Russian ambassador, when he arrived in this city, every civility due to him on the part of the King and government was shown, and all the chief officers of the court occupied themselves in thinking how they might please him and send him back satisfied; likewise as regards his personal comforts, that he might give a good account of the impressions he had received. Many unpleasant circumstances originating with the ambassador, the court passed over in compliment to him; amongst others, that of two Armenians who had murdered a Mahomedan, and took refuge in his house, and the King forgave them for his sake. A Georgian, by the name of Roustum, a servant of the ambassador, who had been brought up from his infancy as a slave, had done many offensive things. A few characters, similar to him, were taken by the ambassador as his servants and guides; their behaviour was very disgusting to the public; they imposed on the ambassador by false accounts, and did every thing to irritate the two governments by wrong information. The

following is an instance:—A person of the royal Kajar tribe (as the literal translation has it, 'having an illness in his nose,' meaning want of sense), who speaks random phrases, the ambassador took him to his house by the advice of Roustum, from whom he heard every thing abusive of the King and his government, which he was encouraged to speak. Meerza Yhacoub, an eunuch and chief manager of the Andaroon, for many years a Musselman, and in the employ of the King, formerly an Armenian, who was bought as a slave, was for a long time a trustworthy servant, but latterly he had stolen cash and jewels to a large amount, and took refuge in the ambassador's house. The King said he would present him to the ambassador if he wished it, but the property must be returned. The ambassador replied, that his Majesty must recover it by law; the government made no objection to this, but were disposed to do so. Meerza Yhacoub, being protected by the ambassador, having referred to a court of justice, was convicted of the theft. He then publicly blasphemed the Prophet, and abused the King to the whole court; he also began to abuse the people as well as the government. Every one in

the city felt indignation at this act, and would not endure it. In the midst of these affairs the ambassador's servant came to inform him that there were two women, formerly brought from a Turkish province as slaves, in the house of Allaya Khan Kajar; that they were Georgians, and wished to return to their country. The ambassador demanded them instantly, but the Khan told him they were brought from the Turkish provinces, and not Georgians; he would not admit these reasonings, and insisted on their being given up. The Shah finding himself cautious, not to offend the ambassador, ordered Allaya Khan to send the women with his servants, that the ambassador might question them personally, and find that they were not Georgians. By the order of the King he did so; but the ambassador sent the servants back and kept the women. The custom of the country is never to permit a woman to remain in a strange man's house, which attaches disgrace to them and their family. Besides keeping the women, it happened that Meerza Yhacoub had an evening party amongst the servants of the ambassador, and that he brought a low woman to the house; the Armenian women were then

brought to join this mixed party of Russians; they began to sigh and grieve. The people felt very much the grievances which these two women suffered till the morning; many applications were made by the servants of Allaya Khan to give up the women, which was refused. The first dispute took place between the ambassador's guards and these servants, which guards were Persians. A quarrel ensued, after which a mob collected, but the ambassador's friends and his servants began and killed a few of the mob with their swords and their guns. The friends of the dead collected and raised a greater mob; the news reached the King's palace. The moment it occurred, my humble self, with two or three thousand men, proceeded to the spot. We made all haste. As we proceeded, we began to beat our way, to quell the people, till we reached the ambassador's house; but the business was finished; all I could do was to save one of the ambassador's secretaries, and three of the Cossack guards. I brought them through the midst of the mob and saved them; all the rest were killed; and the guards of the King, who were posted at the ambassador's house, and did their utmost to protect it, were all killed.

From thirty to forty of the men with me were wounded, but I had rather they had been all killed than that this business should have taken place. By my God and the salt of the King, I had rather myself and children had been all killed, than thus shamefully to stand before you. I do not know, when this letter reaches you, and you know its contents, in what condition you will find yourself. His Majesty says, 'from the revolving of the heavens this has taken place.'* I am here with the ambassador's first secretary, to whom the King makes his apologies and attempts at condolence, and you will do so likewise to the English ambassador and the Russian chiefs that are there: make all apologies you can, and send a person off to Teflis, to explain the proper circumstances. Nevertheless, the whole empire of Persia is bashful and ashamed at this event; but we wish them to know that our servants were not knowing of it; in any way that you think fit to apologise do not fail to offer them."

The Prince immediately sent off a letter to

* The Persians have an idea that the heavens revolve, and that each change produces an event, and according to the doctrine of the Koran they are fatalists.

General Paskevitch, at Teflis, of which the following is a copy (after enumerating his titles with many compliments, &c.) "As being much confused and surprised by the circumstances of the times which we have lately received from the unhappy event which has taken place, we do not know how to open the gate of conversation to you. Mr. Amburger was here (the Russian consul at Tabreez), and he has witnessed our present state; of course he will explain to you to what degree we are grieved and confounded; that we were willing for all our brothers and all our families to be sacrificed than that such a stain should remain on the country. You, I hope, will judge, this is not a thing any human being could have thought of, or that means would have been taken to prevent it; but it is a business so sudden and accidental, done by the low and ignorant people of the town, and their shameful deeds are left to our future days. But at this moment all the government servants, and all the chiefs of the town, are in grief and mourning at the event, and the King has a thousand grievous thoughts for the same. To-day, on the 17th Sharbon (February), his august firmaun has reached from Kalifat to our graceful selves, and a

strict command from his Majesty respecting this event to receive your advice on the subject, and by the same to judge in what way we are to justify ourselves in the presence of your Emperor; to receive it from you, and by this to present the event to his Imperial Majesty. Agreeably to the order of the King we have written this to you, and have sent Meerza Macsood to your presence, that he may on this matter consult you, and if you think proper that Meerza Macsood should proceed on to Petersburgh with the letter to his most high Excellence, the great and supreme Emperor of the Russias, &c. The letter from the King of Kings to the benign Emperor with apologies will follow by Mr. Maltzoff, in order to reach the imperial gate of his Majesty; but the King's orders are these, that the Persian government has purchased the friendship of the Russian government with heart and soul, from which his Majesty would not withhold his hand. Tehran and Petersburgh he considers under one government. If such circumstance had happened at Petersburgh, of course the chiefs would have taken some course to remedy it. We expect you to let us know what plan would be attempted in the case, without considering that

we are separate governments, that we should execute your advice without any change, that we should act upon this advice, and after doing so to apologise for the deed which had been done at Tehran, that we should not leave the government under the load of shamefulness. However, the circumstance of the event which has happened this year has affected me the most from six sides (the heavens, the earth, and the four quarters of the world). I have melancholy grievances, but as you with your pure heart and kindness of nature brought to a close every thing last year, I expect from your usual frankness, that this affair will be concluded amicably, so as to convince his Imperial Majesty that we were not at all aware of it, and it was without our knowledge or wish. He must be convinced that the Persian government will do their utmost to punish with vengeance the individuals committing this offence, and that none of them will be spared. His Majesty is exerting himself to do away from himself this shameful transaction, and to receive from the Russian government their assurances of satisfaction for what he has done. Meerza Macsood will explain to you wholly on the subject."

From the Shah of Persia to his son Abbas Meerza.

" My auspicious and blessed son,—I am at a loss to report to you concerning the changeableness of this revolving sphere. Glory to God! what wonderful accidents may sometimes happen. After that Meerza Grybydoff, the ambassador and the independent minister of the excellent government of Russia, arrived at the capital, and we were glad to find his arrival to be the means of the accomplishment of the treaty between the two governments, and we treated him with every possible kindness and hospitality, to please him beyond every thing, at the different courts held by his Majesty, by various attentions and enquiries, and he took his leave exceedingly pleased and contented. By some unexpected folly of Meerza Yhacoub, some delay takes place at his departure; at length the affair comes to this sort of wonderful disgrace, and there happens some circumstances which nobody has yet seen to happen in this government, nor has imagined it could ever happen. It would never come to my mind that the lower class of the metropolis ever could or would become the means of such imprudent conduct. After

Meerza Yhacoub went to the ambassador to seek his protection, the ambassador sent him, accompanied by Meerza Yani Khan, to Eich Akase, or the chief eunuch of the seraglio, with a message that we are going to take Meerza Yhacoub with us. Some of the nobles of the court, and those who dealt with Meerza Yhacoub, then complained to his Majesty that Meerza Yhacoub is concerned with the money affairs of the treasure, and the management of trade with the harem and the treasury; and, so far as we can see, at least forty or fifty thousand tomauns of the money of the government is in his hands at present. His Majesty was pleased to command that they should detain him till all should be discharged—his accounts settled, and the different affairs in which he is concerned, then he might be given up to the ambassador. From our respect to the ambassador, and being always willing to comply with his wishes, we commanded that no one should interfere with Meerza Yhacoub at present, and let him be sent back to the ambassador accompanied by an interpreter, that in the presence of the ambassador he may settle his accounts; in short, it was determined that they should go to the law the next day. When Meerza

Yhacoub, accompanied by the people of the ambassador, was at the court of law in the presence of the judges and moolahs, and some of the inhabitants of the metropolis, he began to insult both the religion and the government; his impertinent speech terrified and afflicted both high and low, and a great disturbance arose amongst the people, wherefore, in the capital of Islam this degree of insult should be offered to religion; but as the people had seen the degree of kindness of his Majesty and the nobles towards him, they bore his insults for a time, and remained silent. In the meanwhile, two women from the court of *Moosh*, who had formerly become prisoners, and had fallen into the hands of the general, were demanded by the ambassador, under the pretence that they were persons of Kirklesia, notwithstanding the inspectors had enquired, and knew perfectly well that they were not so. Yet, as the ambassador desired to enquire personally, we, in order to comply with his wishes, commanded that the two women should be taken to the ambassador, and that he might do so and send them back again; they were taken—he enquired and knew that they were not Russian subjects, and yet he would not send them back,

and kept them for a pledge for some uncertain prisoners which he claimed, however much he was desired to send back these women, who for many years were Moslems—and whenever we know of any prisoners whom you mention, we will send them to you—this was no use. The complaint and lamentation of the women, who were highly displeased and dishonoured at being in his house, reached the hearing of the people, and became the means of increasing the tumult; yet from the fear of the punishment of his Majesty, no one showed any boldness in it. It happened that on the night of the same day of the transaction, some of the people of the ambassador had seized a woman in the street, and had carried her off violently; and had insulted, the same day, one of the syeeds at the public bazaars beyond every thing. On the following morning, the lower orders, and the rest of the community, in a mob (washing their hands with their souls), with the intention of bringing out the women from the house of the ambassador, unexpectedly attacked his house; and on the other hand, the people of the ambassador and his guards opposing the people, they killed four or five Mus-

selmans with the blows of the musket balls, and wounded several. The people on seeing the bodies of the wounded, would not be pacified by any thing, nor listen to their moolahs, and the very children of the town, who were the leaders of the ignorant, with clubs and stones in their hands, ascended the roof and gate of the ambassador's house; the soldiers of the ambassador, and amongst them were some of your servants, Sulyman, the nephew of Eich Akasi, and others, who, by command of his Majesty had carried a message to the ambassador from his uncle, concerning the settlement of the affair in question. By some fatal accident, a blow reached the Elchee himself, who was killed, and this disgrace was brought upon our government. At first, when the report was brought to his Majesty, the children of the Prince Zelli Sultaun, my chief guard, with the cavalry of the guards, and the rest of my servants then at the court, were sent for the prevention of this disturbance, but the excitement of the mob was to such a degree, that they could not quell it. Moreover, the lower orders in this revolution insulted and abused Zelli Sultaun himself; and at last the up-

roar of the mob extended so far that the gates of the palace were closed, but the soldiers of the guards, and the servants of Zelli Sultaun, were able to do so far as to save, with the greatest difficulty, the first secretary and three others of the ambassador's servants. His Majesty is puzzled why, and astonished that, notwithstanding the willingness which our mind cultivated between the treaty of these two governments, these wonderful things should happen, and particularly such as has never happened before in this government—the uproar of the mob and the resolution of the ignorant people have never had any connexion with this government. Now and then news would reach us from other governments, that the people had set up some revolution, having done so and so, dismissing some minister, or changing the government. We are always surprised and astonished to hear how the affairs of sovereignty may be carried on with these difficulties. In those days when Hadji Khalib Khan, ambassador from this government, was killed in India by some accident of this sort, we would not believe at first that it was not done intentionally—till we experienced the kindness of the English government, and beheld

the firmness of their promise and contract; then we became assured the accident happened providentially, not intentionally. However, the grief and anxiety which have found their voice to our royal mind, will not come into any description by writing, and I need not explain and represent them. We value the friendship and treaty of that government more than you, my son, but our sorrow is beyond expression at this accident, because the publication of the circumstance will be the cause of disgrace to this government. Although no sensible man would expect this sort of outrage, yet we deem it necessary that we should inform that son his exellency Meerza Amburger is there—you must inform him of the truth of this perfectly. We do not consider any difference between these two governments in regard to our friendship and union. Tehran and St. Petersburgh are the same—let them suppose that this accident has happened in that metropolis, not in this—and whatever they would do in such a case, we will do the same, according to any two religions or laws of either government. Whatever punishment is to be inflicted, or recompense given, we are perfectly ready to do so; and moreover, certainly the regards of

the friendship and the cultivation of the contract are beyond any thing in our consideration; the expulsion of this disgrace from our government is our duty, and we shall do it. The bodies of the Russians are all buried with due respect to them, and we have treated with the greatest kindness, and shall continue to do so, the secretary and others saved. The leaders of the mob we have punished already in some degree, and shall continue to do so, and are expecting to receive some intelligence from that son concerning the accomplishment of some reparation for this accident by Meerza Amburger; and we are about to send the deputy ambassador, accompanied by Razan Alikhum, with an answer to the correspondence of the Emperor, with royal firmans to General Paskevitch within three days; these people, being present, having witnessed the transactions, they can state the truth better than any one else. In short, we demand assistance of that son in reparation of this disgrace."

His Majesty's Gazette of this horrible outrage being so very copious, leaves me but little to add respecting it. The ambassador, from the time of his arrival in Persia, had made himself very obnoxious

at the court of Tabreez in various ways—amongst others, that of coming into the presence of the Prince with dirty boots, thereby soiling his carpets, than which nothing can be more offensive, and which only the courteous urbanity of an Abbas Meerza would overlook. At Zenjen, on his way to Tehran, he took upon himself to interfere amongst the Armenian and Georgian subjects, to the extent of tying up and punishing most severely a Mahomedan, for having, as he said, inveigled away an Armenian woman; in which there was no truth. This gave such offence to the people, that they began to complain of their Shah, that he had not power to protect them against the Muscovite infidels. At Kazvine he did the same, offering protection to all the renegadoes of the government, and interfering amongst the Georgians and Armenians in such a manner, that the people were quite indignant at his conduct; and he was seriously advised to leave the place, or they would not answer for his personal safety. The remainder of the catastrophe is told by the Shah.

The guard spoken of by his Majesty consisted of a hundred men from the choice troops of the Shah. The women alluded to, as being detained

all night, were most barbarously used by the Russians; in the morning they fled from the house almost naked, running through the streets imploring to be revenged on the infidels. This attracted a large crowd of the people, who, inflamed by their cries, went towards the ambassador's house, full of revenge for the injuries they had received. The guards (already alluded to) fired, and killed six of the Musselmans; this excited the mob to the greatest fury; the bodies of these true believers were taken up and exposed at six different mosques; the moolahs made use of them to excite the people to a sort of frenzy, and to revenge the spilling of Mahomedan blood on their murderers the Muscovites.

A body of thirty thousand people had now congregated together, with an inflammable feeling which nothing could resist, and such a tide poured towards the ambassador's house as threatened annihilation to it and to its inmates. Seeing the mob advance, it is said Mr. Grybydoff went forward with his sword drawn, but he was immediately knocked down by a stone on the temple; the mob crying out, "the Elchee is killed." Then being determined to massacre every one of the Russians,

they broke in and dispatched about thirty of them, including Cossacks.

In the mean time the King hearing of the tumult, sent his troops to the aid of the Russians, with Ali Shah at their head, as already described. Mr. Maltzoff, whom he saved, he smuggled through the mob in a Persian uniform. The three Cossacks were concealed in a stable. The number of the mob which were shot by the Russians was about thirty. Never was the fury of the Persians supposed to have been so excited as by those provocations offered by the Russians.

Meerza Yhacoub was the first that fell, and they dragged his body around the city, and flung it into a ditch. The mob, not content with massacring the poor victims, made piles of the human rubbish, dipped their hands in the blood of the Muscovites, and with horrid shouts mocked and derided the fallen dead. One man, in particular, was so incensed as to be seen cutting pieces of flesh from the slain. The body of the ambassador was found under the devoted heap, with a finger cut off, supposed to have been for plunder. It was deposited in the Armenian church; the remainder of the bodies were given over to the Armenians of the

town, who interred them in their own receptacles for the dead.

They searched diligently, even with lighted candles, through the house for more victims, it being intimated that there were some concealed (these were no doubt the three Cossacks alluded to). They then proceeded to the stables of the British residency, where they murdered seven or eight Russian servants, and carried off all their horses.

The unfortunate Mr. Grybydoff was only thirty-two years of age, a man of extraordinary talent as a linguist, and as an author he had much distinguished himself. His lady was at that time at Tabreez; she was the daughter of Prince Tcheftekwadze, of Teflis. I saw her go off with the Russian consul already spoken of, though she was kept in ignorance of the tragical death of her husband.

On arrival of the news at Tabreez, the consternation of the Prince was excessive. He immediately sent for Colonel Macdonald, to consult with him what was to be done. A general mourning was ordered for eight days. The news arrived on the day of some grand fête; he gave

immediate orders for all rejoicings to be stopped on the penalty of twelve tomauns each person, and losing their toe nails. Meerza Macsood was sent off to Teflis to General Paskevitch with the letter of which a copy has been given, and some time after the body of the murdered ambassador arrived on its way to the same destination, for interment; it was lodged in an Armenian church outside the town, the Persians having a superstitious prejudice against corpses being received within the city gates.*

It was first stated that the apologies offered to General Paskevitch were deemed sufficient; and that to confirm the amicable feeling of the Russian government, another ambassador would be sent to Tehran, General Dolgorouky; and it was then thought the storm had blown over. But by a second dispatch it was stated that the affair must be settled at St. Petersburgh, and not at Teflis. This occasioned great consternation to Abbas Meerza, who, at length, sent his son, Khousroof

* The gallant and much respected Major Hart died outside the city of Tabreez, in June 1830. To bring him in for interment in the Armenian church, the body was dressed up in full uniform, and brought in a "takht ravan," in an upright posture of seeming vitality.

Meerza, with the Ameer y Nizam, to the Russian capital, on a mission of apologies.*

I shall close my report of this tragical event at Tehran by a copy from the Petersburgh Gazette respecting it, which I saw at Erzroume, when in the Russian camp, where the officers were very curious to hear my version of it from Persia. Monsieur Rodofinikin, the son of the oriental dragoman at the court of St. Petersburgh, at

* I heard much of the movements of the Persian Prince, particularly at Tula, having followed soon after, and where I by chance fell in with the train of the Turkish ambassador, Halil Pasha, and was much amused at our mutual deceptions at the *Fabrique d'Armes*, a very large establishment, of which the Russians are justly proud. What with my cap, pelisse, &c. I was taken by the authorities as belonging to their suite. Once or twice they looked at me very hard, as much as to say, "Who are you?" still I passed on. The "conductor," (apparently a Russian officer) at length seeing that neither the Prince nor the Persians addressed me, began to suspect that I was not one of them, and a lady coming up enquiring how it was that I was not at the theatre last evening with the Pasha, I was so completely posed, that the officer could no longer forbear asking me who and what I was. On my replying, "*Un voyageur Anglois*," he burst into a loud laugh. "Well," said he, "and I too am all the way from Birmingham." It was a Mr. Jones, who wore the Russian epaulettes, as superintendent of his Imperial Majesty's *Fabrique d'Armes*. I spent the evening at his house, and was introduced to his family; the cause of his emigration was, his talent being worth more at Tula than at Birmingham.

whose tent we were at dinner, read the said gazette, of which the following is a copy:—

"March 15—27, 1829. Letters received from Tehran inform us of a horrible catastrophe, which took place in that city on the 29th January, in consequence of a quarrel between some of the servants of our minister, Mr. Grybydoff, and some of the people. Some idlers being assembled in front of the minister's house during the quarrel, thought they ought to take part in it; and some amongst them being killed, an immense crowd flew from the bazaars to revenge their countrymen, forced the door of the house, scaled the walls in spite of the resistance of our Cossacks, and that of the Persian guards, who lost four men in this attack, and succeeded in penetrating into the interior apartments, where every one who ventured before the rage of the infuriated mob was massacred. In vain the Shah himself, accompanied by his son, Zelli Sultaun, governor-general of Tehran, arrived with a considerable armed force to arrest and disperse the wretches; it was too late—Mr. Grybydoff and his suite had been already victims of the assassins. The first

secretary of legation, Mr. Maltzoff, and three other individuals, have alone escaped the carnage. The Shah, Abbas Meerza, and all the court, are in the greatest consternation; the latter has ordered a mourning for eight days, anxious to give us all the satisfaction which we require. He proposes to send for that purpose to the Count Paskevitch d'Erivan, his eldest son, and the Kaimacan, to bring all the details, and all the explanations which the commander-in-chief can require respecting this disastrous event."

Thus ended this dreadful tragedy of the Persian mob. None of them were punished by the government, and no compensation was required. Khousroof Meerza was fêted every where in Russia; his reception by the Emperor was gracious and flattering, and, for the season, the Persian prince was the lion of St. Petersburgh.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TATAR GALLOP.

On the 23rd November I got into the saddle. The morning opened in a tempest on the Black Sea, to which I was turning my back; it was tossed to and fro in foamy fury, agitated by one of those frightful storms, the result of "the elemental strife" of this part of the world. The ominous cloud, about the size of a man's hand, soon spread over the horizon, and seemed to awake the winds, which threatened destruction to all opposing objects. It was a magnificent sight, and I waited some time in hopes that the clouds would exhaust themselves, and that there would be some chance of a

THE TATAR GALLOP

tranquil atmosphere. But the rain continued to fall, the horses were ready, the burly Tatar became impatient, so we started.

On climbing the paved hills (for such they literally are) which bound the town of Trebisonde, we found them cut into flights of stairs, over which the horses climb with wonderful ease. The ground was partially covered with snow, and the wind blew from every point of the compass. I had agreed with the Tatar to take me about seven hundred miles to Tabreez, which he was to do in as many days, with five horses; one for the "surrigee," or guide, who takes the post horses from one station to another, such stations being from twenty to thirty miles apart, according to the villages; the Tatar's horse; my own; one baggage, and one kitchen horse, to carry pans, kettles, provisions, &c. The provisions consisted principally of coffee, tea, sugar, rice, &c.; the Tatar undertaking for bread, fowls, eggs, "yourt," or sour milk.

It is, however, precarious to trust too much to the purveyor, for the Tatars not only pay nothing to the villagers where they levy, but often tax them in coin, "for the skin of their teeth," as they call it.

My bargain with him was two thousand five hundred Turkish piastres, or about twenty-five pounds sterling, with a "bakshish," or present, on arrival, provided I was satisfied with his conduct. This bargain I made through my interpreter, the Tatar not speaking Persian; so that not a word of understanding existed between us beyond the indispensable tchibook and tobacco.

In such travel dilemmas, and where you commit yourself to the care of an entire stranger who may lead you into ambush, or betray you to the Koords, it is better to employ a government Tatar, his character and credit being at stake for your safe conduct; and if he forfeits these he loses all future employ. These Tatars are generally bulky men; they ride small horses, and with a weight of tackling quite oppressive to the little animals, who shake themselves beneath their load, and run with an ambling pace more like that of a dog than a horse, when out of the gallop.

I should observe that the Tatar is furnished with a "teskeret," or order from the Pasha, to supply him with the required number of horses at the post-houses, an establishment much better

* See Appendix.

kept up in Turkey than in Persia. This "teskeret" is deemed a necessary protection to the traveller.

The first stage to Gevaslic I deem the scenery to be almost equal to that of Switzerland. The snowy hill-tops were interspersed here and there with the black pine, which, yielding to the blast, scattered its white clothing about in flaky variety; and the mountain torrents, with their impetuous roar, hastened to the sea, impatient seemingly of every interruption. This was to me an anxious day, from the solitariness of the scene, though accompanied by man and beast, and from the difficult passes, where I was obliged to follow more like a bale of goods attached to the saddle than as having any interest in the adventure.

Arrived at our station, the horses fagged, and I somewhat jaded, I was glad to resume my old quarters at Gevaslic, where I had formerly lodged; and on the benches of the coffee-house I established myself for the night, and made it out in tolerable comfort. But the Tatar became jealous of my rest, and at three in the morning we were again in the saddle, having girded ourselves for the warfare of the day. We were soon climbing

the hills again, this being a very mountainous district.

Hence we proceeded to the dreary station of Karakaban, a solitary hut in the mountains, planted for the convenience of post horses. It appeared to me to be misery's head-quarters; and, independent of a fine flow of water, I do not remember any other provision. We were now getting into the mining districts of "Gumish-Khaneh," or the "Silver House," with its surface as barren as its bowels were rich, if report spoke true. The town itself was on the side of a hill, seemingly inaccessible; I saw no possibility of approach to it; but on turning the corner, a path had been hewed out through a rock which was strongly fortified. Thus, in many of the Asiatic towns, instead of planting them where good approaches may be obtained, every design indicates mistrust, the fear of treachery, and the dread of arbitrary power.

Threading our way to this most intricate town of Gumish Khaneh, the Tatar housed me in a warm stable, and soon were my senses steeped in forgetfulness, which my restless companion rudely interrupted. To dispute his will would have been to be left alone in the wilderness; so buckling on

my armour, I had nothing for it but to mount again the stirrup of activity.

This district is noted for its good garden ground; and amongst other produce, the pears are most celebrated. I should say that the village bore rather a healthy hue compared to many others; there was less of that squalidness and skin-eaten poverty which in Toorkistan is often so conspicuous.

Once in the saddle the Tatar feels inspired again, sets up a wild howl of delight, cracks his whip, and off he sets full speed, the horses seemingly partaking of his inspiration. If you happen to lag behind, then he acts as whipper-in; you have only to keep the saddle, it is *his* affair to get you on as he would any other merchandise. Many a time was the "surrigee" rolling in the snow. He lays his whip over both man and horse: up they spring and on again, nothing daunted. This is a most spirit-stirring mode of travel, and the animation of a Tatar gallop is perfectly bewitching; it excites, I may almost say *creates*, faculties unknown before. In going over the boundless plains—the rocky ravines—the more difficult the road, the quicker it must be passed. There were many places where a few inches, right or left, would be fatal to both

man and horse. "Crack" went the whip—and they were passed before I had time to think of danger; and Ferrajulah, looking back at me with that air of satisfaction which imposes confidence, I must confess that I became at length as fearless as himself, and enjoyed the bustling scene.

On arrival at Baiboot, I could scarcely get accommodation even in a stable. They have an inveterate enmity to all Ferengees, since the Russians beat the town about their ears. A large wound in the skull of a mosque, and a leaning minaret of another, perpetuate these injuries to the Moslems. The successive stations of Karogulah and Ash Kaleh were passed with great rapidity. At the latter, numerous streams were gushing down from the mountains, all combining to form that mighty Euphrates, which makes so long a march on the Asiatic soil.

At Elidja, about ten miles from Erzroume, is a fountain of mineral water, surrounded by a low wall; it was then at boiling heat in the centre of the basin. Its properties were celebrated for the cure of rheumatism, though but little used by the natives.

Dashing into the city of Erzroume, almost blinded

with the snow, I was gladdened with the sight of the "lion rampant and the one-horned unicorn" over the British consulate, the hospitable inmate of which gave prompt shelter and food to the weary traveller. The approach to this place, which is the capital of Turkish Armenia, is through the burying grounds, which are uninclosed, and extend a great way, having numerous cupolas, head-stones with gilt turbans, and long inscriptions, for which the Turks are so celebrated in the way of epitaphs.

But the Tatar gallop affords no time to transcribe epitaphs; so arranging for fresh horses and renewing our teskeret, we were soon again in the saddle, and arrived after dark at Hassan Kaleh. I had consoled myself with the expectation of a long night of it in a warm stable, where, man and beast mixed up together, one gets animal warmth where sometimes no other can be obtained. But the impatient Tatar thought otherwise; so girding himself at six o'clock, I had no alternative but to follow his imperious will, though I would have fain escaped from any farther progress that night.

It was bitter cold. The roughness of the way caused many a slip to our steeds, rolling sometimes the Tatar and sometimes the surigee in the snow.

But these are trifles—nothing is permitted to prevent the Tatar's progress—the long whip does every thing for man and beast; its spirit-stirring influence is irresistible. In these midnight gallops the sound of a dog is most harmonious, as it indicates a village, and possibly rest. About three o'clock in the morning we dashed into Delli Baba, in spite of canine interruptions offered to us at every corner.

Housed in a warm stable, I was asleep in an instant, standing by my horse. But not long did I enjoy this privilege. Ferrajulah shook me to the painful consciousness of being still subject to his arbitrary government. I resisted all I could. "Yawash," Stop! He then indicated that we were in the Koord country, insinuating danger by passing his knife before his throat. This was exciting, so off we galloped.

I was well acquainted with the country, and understood his intention to give me no rest until we arrived at Torprach Kaleh. I did expect to rough it certainly, but this was roughing it in the superlative degree; so I determined to resist my Tatar, and taking advantage of his advance, I bounded off to the first village I could discover, he after me, shouting and pointing towards this sta-

tion. I got into the stable before him, and having been sixteen hours on horseback, fell immediately asleep.

This was a wretched place called Zadecan, and with difficulty did I get the common supplies of bread and milk, for the former having to wait the baking. This is quite an event in a Turkish village. The oven is sunk in the ground of the common resting place, and heated by dried dung, the ordinary fuel in Turkish villages. The thin pancake dough is then planted against its sides, and it requires but short time to convert it into bread. Sitting around the oven's mouth, I had to wait the operation with hungry impatience, and making out the night on dirty nummeds, I was quite ready at break of day to start for Torprach Kaleh.

Here we breakfasted with the Agha, who was a Koord; indeed the whole neighbourhood may be said to be inhabited by these people, who in their striped "abas," or cloaks, and red woollen caps hanging down the neck, present a grotesque appearance in these wild countries. The horses were small but active, and we dashed through the numerous swamps with wonderful rapidity. Ferra-

julah had no time for accidents, and as we made our first dash through the Euphrates, "Frat," he exclaimed (the Turkish name for this river), and cracking his whip, I had no time to taste of this most ancient of waters.

Diadin, the next station, presents some ruinous fortifications, all crumbling into dust. It was here that I formerly rode over the roof of a house unknowingly;* but the Tatar now found me better quarters. These government couriers are much respected in these countries—feared, I should say; a crack of their whip inspires terror.

The wild passes of the mountains, although there was but little time to admire them, were fancifully grand this day. The snow on them was but partial, and the vallies were so rich in pasture varieties, where they were sheltered from the northern blasts, it seemed a struggle, as it were, between summer and winter. I was too much engrossed with the sight to heed my way, and down came my horse, head foremost, but as suddenly started into the gallop by the magic of the Tatar's whip. We got to our station in fine style,

* See page 172.

though I imagined the jaded animals could never reach it.

Two of the Turkish luxuries, in the way of feeding, are "yourt," or sour milk, and "kymack," or clouted cream, both excellent of their kind. They have a minced meat called "dogmah," which is rolled into balls and covered with vine leaves; this is also good. Here, abundantly provided with these provisions, at a good station, messing together with Ferrajulah, we laughed at and with each other, our only mode of intercourse.

There is a sort of satisfaction in accomplishing any object of fatigue or difficulty, and I got so animated by my Tatar gallop as to feel quite impatient to get again into the saddle. A most important comfort to this mode of travelling is the English bridle and saddle, with which I was not provided. The Turkish tackling is so very rude as to be almost unusable by a Ferengee.

On the side of a ravine, in a rocky defile, lay a Koordish village of straggling earth pots, as I call them—habitations they can scarcely be named. But, *malgre moi*, here he would take me; and with difficulty did we climb to those dens of misery, amidst the baying of dogs and the vociferations of

a ragged community; for our arrival had produced quite an *emeute.* The "rysh soofeed," or old agha, led the way to his domicile, from whence issued beings of all sorts—"shame-faced females" included—and seeing a Ferengee come in amongst them, their modest confusion was of the most amusing kind. But they were all ejected together by the government authority, which bears more of the physical than the argumentative character.

Ferrajulah seemed quite at home here; and spite of my impatience, I had to make out the night amidst all sorts of rubbish. The hut was lit from the top, and there being no chimney, the fire was kindled in the middle of it, in order to the smoke's escape; and as this did not always happen, we were visited with sundry portions of it, much to my discomfort.

As to the Koordish cooking, it would puzzle even a Kitchener to imitate it; and as I lay on my nummed of patience and smoked my pipe of novelty, I was much amused at these scenes of Koordish domesticity. I wondered, too, how the night arrangements were to be made to accommodate so large a family; looking out for retiring rooms, dormitories, &c., but not any were to be

found; and as the night approached, the family increased. But the sleeping arrangements were soon made; the dirty bolsters and carpets were brought in and stretched promiscuously on the ground, the fire-spot being the most attractive. Here lay master, mistress, and sundry family sprouts, male and female, all of a heap, as accident or cold seemed to draw them together, rather miscellaneously arranged.

Ferrajulah and I kept our distance, for I had found out rather the aristocratic part of the cabin, and he lay at my feet. Koordish somnolency appeared to me to differ very little from that of Frangistan. The old man began the concert, the others followed, about eight in number. This effectually prevented my taking part in it.

About midnight a young woman came in, accompanied by a large dog, and stalked cautiously around to discover seemingly a bare spot to rest upon. I watched their movements by the light of the embers, which threw occasional flaming tints over the scene; but as she approached the aristocratic part of the cabin, I set up such a noise (as if in troubled sleep) that she soon decamped; and being desirous to do the same, I shook myself

at an early hour from my nummed (the Koordish mode of cleansing), and most gladly escaped from my resting-place.

Being detained at Khoie a whole day to obtain horses, I rambled through the bazaars, and saw a good deal of this large city, the gates of which are respectable; but the bridges over the dry ditch are of so tumble-down a description as to be highly dangerous; they are built on slight poles, so as to yield in the middle some six or eight inches of level, and miserably propped with poles from below. There is design in this I imagine. Fancy a contumacious governor within; he cuts down the bridges in five minutes, and defies the outside authority. In Persia every thing indicates stratagem; half the world live by it; no wonder that the art so thrives on the soil, or at the ready wits of the Persians.

The plain of Khoie is most extensive, and richly dotted with villages; but we must not tarry amongst them, being now within two days of Tabreez. There was no time for musings. Ferrajulah became more impatient; the "bakshish," or present, was to depend on his promptitude; and although the ground was occasionally much flooded, where bridges are

unknown or so imperfect as to render them dangerous, we had many a fording difficulty, but they were all surmounted by his activity.

When the old ark or arsenal of Tabreez appeared in view, which may be seen at a great distance, the Tatar raised himself in the stirrups, quite inspired as it were with the prospect. "Tabreez! Tabreez!" Crack goes the whip, the jaded horses take fresh courage, and we very soon attained the goal of our wishes.

I was uncommonly pleased with my recognitions of even the mud walls, and making rapid way over the rotten bridge, was much gratified to hear shouted out, "Sahib ame dast," "the Sahib is come," from an old acquaintance who was making his way to me. As I galloped up to the Khan's, my old abode, and from thence to the doctor's, I was received on all sides with the kindest greetings;—"Koosh amadeed," "Koosh guelden," and so on. Really I began to think that this world is not such a barren spot for human affections as some represent it to be, and I felt a sort of fraternizing amongst my Persian friends, a sort of home-ties; and the domestics coming in, salaaming, kissing my hand, with "Your place has long been empty,"

" May your shadow increase," &c. It was altogether a most agreeable termination to my journey. Then the sort of triumph with which Ferrajulah led me in, having performed his bargain, and looking for his " bakshish."

I speedily delivered myself, through my interpreter, of the numerous enquiries which I had bottled up on the way—why he stopped at one place, and went on from another; all of which he satisfactorily answered; and I made him happy beyond his expectations.

To give a fillip to nature and a buoyancy to the faculties, I should say there is nothing like a Tatar gallop.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE "TAKHT KAJAR.'

This palace, which is considered to be one of the Persian "lions," is situated about one fursek, or four miles, from Tehran, under the refreshing mountains of Shemroun, within a large garden enclosed by the usual mud walls. The garden, though formal, is umbrageous and fruitful, and plentifully watered—the great source of all Persian luxuries. The sandy soil which one is obliged to pass from the city, is desperately fatiguing, in a climate at 97 Fahrenheit, in the shade; but the moment you cross the little brook, from whence spring

melons, grapes, and pomegranates, the wilderness smiles as it were, and the rose triumphs over the desert.

The "bauleh kaneh" at the entrance bespoke neglect and decay, two prominent agents under a despotic government, where all private interests are merged in the sovereign. This palace was built by the late King of Persia; and he would occasionally resort to it from the stifling heat of Tehran, accompanied by some of his wives and courtiers. A spacious avenue was intersected by a marble basin, of tolerable workmanship, and some attempt at hydraulic display; but the thirsty lions gaped in drought, seeming to "blow wind and crack their cheeks."

Continuing the line of way, I mounted a terrace so overgrown with intrusive weeds, as to be no longer a bridle-path. Here a dilapidated building bore strong marks of the Persian blight;—there were tanks, waterfalls, &c., all in thirsty decay. The palace, built on a rock at the foot of the mountains, bore every semblance of a prison, evidently fortified against surprise or force,—strongly indicative of Persian jealousy and suspicion; and on thundering at the brass gate, the

hollow responses of the vaulted passages gave me a dreamy recollection of Doubting Castle. I must confess that I had many doubts whether I might commit myself within its precincts. However, as I had nothing to apprehend, and being goaded on by the spur of novelty, I made my way into a large court which led to the baths, all lined with marble. Farther on were the harem apartments; there were likewise other suites of rooms, too numerous to particularise, the whole well supplied with water. At the extremity of the court were two large halls, painted in fresco, with numerous portraits of kings and heroes, magnificently attired in oriental frippery. The *ensemble* gave me any idea but that of a royal residence; there was a muteness over the whole; the actors were all gone; and I never saw any thing so completely desolate, with a sort of chilling blight quite repulsive to the feelings.

I traversed two long dark galleries, which led to the baths already alluded to. Not a voice was heard, not even a "peish kedmet," or head servant, to welcome me with a "bismillah" to this summer palace of the late Shah. I made my way to the Shah's bed-chamber, which is

ascended by a narrow staircase of fifteen steps, with windows opening on the court of the harem and the gardens. Some rude paintings were on the walls, and amongst them was that of a British envoy, but without name or date. From hence, taking my survey of the solitary country, I could scarcely imagine any spot worse chosen for the capital of Persia than that of Tehran; but history informs me that it had been chosen as the seat of government by Agha Mahomed Shah Koja, the uncle of the late King, as being in the immediate territory of his tribe, the Kajars.

Since this Shah occupies so conspicuous a place in the Persian annals, I will pause for a moment to give a few particulars respecting him, as recorded by Sir John Malcolm, in his History of Persia.

"Agha Mahomed Khan was the founder of the Kajar dynasty, the uncle of the late Shah. He waded through seas of blood to reach the throne; and the early part of his reign was distinguished by continual conflicts with the legitimate heir, Jaffier Khan, and his son, Lootf Aly Khan, who were at length taken prisoners, and suffered the most horrible barbarities from the usurper, and

with them terminated the Zund family. Of his two brothers, who materially assisted him to the possession of the empire, one of them, of whom he was afraid as a competitor, he ordered his eyes to be scooped out; and the other, Jaffier Kouli Khan, to whom he was more particularly indebted for his musnud, or throne, he decoyed to the capital, on the pretence of giving him the government of Ispahan, where he was barbarously murdered under the portico of a new palace by hired assassins; and some accounts say, in the presence of the late Shah, then called Baba Khan, to whom he said, loading him with abuse, 'It is for you that I have done this; the gallant spirit which animated that body would never have permitted my crown to rest on your head in peace. Persia would have been distracted with internal wars; to avoid these consequences, I have acted with shameful ingratitude, and have sinned deeply against God and man.'"

The blackest hypocrisy was conspicuous in this Shah, and his conscience was seared as with a hot iron. At Kerman, where the inhabitants had rebelled against him, and sheltered one of his opponents, Lootf Aly, he laid a contribution upon them of so many sacks of eyes. It is said that more than

seven thousand people were thus mutilated to make up the quantity; and they now relate the circumstance in Persia as an undoubted fact, that as the eyes were brought in on trays and thrown on the ground before him, he turned them over with the end of his whip, gloating in his barbarity.

It were endless to narrate all the circumstances of his bloody deeds; nay, they are scarcely known, and they display such a dark map of human depravity, that one shudders at the monster. Building towers of human heads, they say, was nothing uncommon, and one of them now exists at Ispahan.

The Shah was brave as well as cruel; he displayed both these qualities in Georgia, which had revolted during his reign, from dependence on Persia to that of Russia. The inhabitants of Teflis were visited with his fiery vengeance; and in it was committed the usual barbarities of fire and sword, driving thousands of the natives into captivity, binding, and throwing their priests into the river, destroying their churches, wasting their habitations. The Mahomedan historian of this monarch, to convey some idea of the sufferings of the poor inhabitants, says, "that on this glorious occasion, the valiant warriors of Persia gave to the

Georgian unbelievers a specimen of what they were to expect on the day of judgment."

An expedition against Sheshah proved to be the last of Agha Mahomed Shah's military undertakings. Two of his servants quarrelled; their noise disturbed him in his tent, and he immediately ordered them to be put to death. After great entreaties on the part of his grand vizier, Hadji Ibrahim, whom, if any one, he respected, the execution was postponed unto the following morning. The men, rendered desperate by their sentence, which they knew would be carried into effect, determined on destroying the tyrant. Either his days or theirs were numbered; and reckless of consequences, they entered the tent of the King whilst he slept. Alarmed at the noise of destroying the sentinel, which was the work of a moment, the Shah sprang from his couch, and struggled hard for life, promising pardon to his assailants; it is even said that he cut down one of them, rendered desperate by his position; but the other plunged a poinard into his heart, and afterwards cut off his head and displayed it to the troops in the camp. Thus fell, by a deserved fate, certainly the greatest tyrant that Persia had ever nourished

on her soil, and a blot to human nature, such as history, perhaps, in her varied pages, Roman or Grecian, will scarcely again present us with; it was a lust of blood, a wantonness of cruelty insatiable.*

Some are of opinion, that the latter acts of the Shah's life indicated insanity, since he was subject to fits. "Cut out his eyes," was the order of the day for the most trifling offence, which order was immediately obeyed, and the poor wretches had to grope through the remainder of their days in darkness. Such facts are stated to show what absolute power the sovereign possesses in Persia, and what the mind of the man-monster is capable of when loosened to his own unbridled passions. I am not more astonished at the conception of his sanguinary decrees, than I am at the execution of them; that a nation should be so awed by one individual as to massacre each other at his dictation.

The Shah, when uninfluenced by those passions, kept up in his court a royal sway of kingly dignity,

* The tyrant has been admirably depicted by Mr. Morier in his "Zhorab," or the Hostage. I have never seen any illustrations of Persia so graphic, so correct, and, at the same time, so ludicrous, as of this talented writer, in his "Haji Baba." The Persians say of this Shah that he never retired to rest satisfied without having murdered one of his subjects.

of which he was very tenacious; at such times he occupied himself in acquiring contributions to his coffers, when he did not like to exact them by force. He was strongly tinctured with avarice, that prominent blight of the Persian character, and many facts illustrative of this are related by Sir John Malcolm, to whom I refer enquirers whom they may interest; limiting myself to one anecdote.

The King was passionately fond of hunting; and disappointed one day at not bringing down a stag which he shot at, he became vexed and irascible. A peasant soon passed by with a deer on his shoulders. "Oh!" cried the King, "that man has killed my game—cut off his ears." The poor peasant, who came from quite another direction, and was ignorant of his Majesty's disappointment, protested against this operation; but his ears were bared to the knife by the faroshes. "Softly," said he; "take but a slice from each ear, and I will give you all the money in my pocket"—which was four rials (six shillings). The offer aroused the King, who overheard him. "What does he say?" It was repeated. "I will make a better bargain with you," said the King; "give me the money, and the whole of your ears shall be preserved."

I continued my way, frequently questioning my guide about what I saw, of which he was quite as well informed as myself. The walls were adorned in the oriental style, with stained glass, Koran inscriptions, and royal poetry, all in fine characters; the ceilings were good, and the doors of exquisite workmanship, inlaid with ivory, ebony, mother-of-pearl, and other ornaments. I need scarcely say, that the building was all of mud—"nothing like mud" in Persia; and as I traversed again the lonely halls below, a chilly feeling came over me, which caused me hastily to depart. I had taken an extensive view of the surrounding country; the sandy map below me bespoke sterility and drought; but here and there, where the bubbling fountain sprung in the vale, it was beautifully dotted with villages. They are numerous in this district of Shemroun, and their luxuriant foliage, amidst the wild oases of the deserts, is a great relief to the monotonous tedium of Persian scenery.

The Takht Kajar, although deemed to be one of the best country palaces near Tehran, was but seldom visited by the late Shah; there was a

quietude in his general habits of life, which rendered him contented with but few changes; and when those of climate became necessary, he would generally go to camp on the plains of Sultiniah; or even near Tehran these changes were easily attainable. It is astonishing at what short distances great variations of the thermometer occur, of from twenty to thirty degrees.

I arrived at the gate of this garden in the month of August, at six o'clock in the morning, oosing at every pore, and I found within it the freshness of spring. Descending the terrace below, which was divided by a dry canal, a farther descent, by a covered staircase, led to a second and third terrace, at the bottom of which was a small building, likewise ornamented with paintings, frescoes, &c., the view from which was very pretty. The garden was gained by another descent, which I traversed again and again. I snuffed up its sweets amidst a thicket of flowers. It was crowded with fruit trees, and at this season so laden, as to satiate all appetite. The walls were lofty, having four gates, each of them with a small room over, all in rapid decay.

CHAPTER XIX.

TABREEZ.

In describing any one Persian city, the description will apply generally to others, allowing for differences of the scite and dimensions. The mode of building, or rather of burrowing under the ground, is general in Persia. The soil which they excavate is moulded into walls—mud upon mud—with flat roofs, the whole baked into a uniform substance, so strong as to resist cannon balls.

I had had a long midnight march from Marand, with one attendant only, Bucktrari Ali, who was to conduct me for the first time into Persia. No means of communication existed between us beyond that of signs. Wearied and sleepy, I was nearly

dropping from my horse, when Ali sung out "Tabreez." In vain did I look out for any thing resembling the busy haunts of men. A large brick elevation, called the "ark," or arsenal, was the most prominent object in view. This was surrounded by small mounds of mud, as they appeared to me, about ten or twelve feet above the surface.

On entering the gate, which was ornamented with coloured tiles, I found myself in a narrow drain-way, as it appeared to me, a line of irregular walls on each side, with occasional small doors, leading to what I imagined to be dog kennels, or some such respectable abodes. A khanaut, or stream of water, was partially opened, partially covered; herds of dogs were on the walls, disputing almost our passage, and remains of others lying in the way, the putrescence of which was emitting a most offensive smell. Droves of donkeys laden with brush wood were disputing the narrow way, driving me up against the walls, and the ups and downs of the rubbish, which had been allowed to accumulate into hillocks, required no little care to surmount them. Of human dwellings, or what appeared to be such, I saw none, not a window, nor a sign of habitancy beyond the straggling passers-by, some

in sheep-skin coats, badly slippered, but well armed, through which I had to make my way.

I now became incredulous as to the faithfulness of my guide; which Ali seeming to perceive, still cried out "Tabreez;" and so it proved indeed to be. I soon found my friends, enjoying the sight of a tank of water leading to their dwellings. Descending some eight or ten feet into an enclosed court, the said dwelling was very respectable for an Asiatic soil, having only the ground floor, the roof being on a level with the street.

I was still for a long time incredulous as to my being actually in the once renowned city of Tauris, of which Chardin gives so glowing a description; I still thought I had been cheated into a suburb, to give me the more agreeable surprise at seeing the original city. But so it really was; and my oriental dream about "the land of the sun, the garden of the East, the air scented like musk," was at once dissipated, especially as regarded the latter point, for my olfactory nerves were greeted by nothing but the odour of decaying dead dogs!

Subsequent experience and residence gave me more intimate acquaintance with this oriental city, the boundaries of which I grew well acquainted

with, from my almost daily walk around the scolloped mud walls, which are nearly three miles in circumference, and have seven gates. These walls are double, having a wide dry ditch between, and the inner ones are flanked by towers, at irregular distances, on which sentinels are planted, and also at the different gates. The keys are nightly sent to the governor or beglerbeg of the city, and without his special permission they cannot be opened until the accustomed morning hour; it is very difficult to obtain ingress or egress out of the appointed time, as I more than once experienced.

The bridges over the dry ditches of which I have spoken, are built of and upon long poles, slanting in the middle, sometimes with large holes here and there, where the leg of a horse or a mule has damaged the building, threatening to do the like by the leg of the horse or mule in return. So frail are the bridges, and so positively dangerous, that I scarcely ever passed one without expecting it would break under me. As to the scarp and counter-scarp, the bastions, curtains, and the rest of the fortifications, they appeared to me to be very respectable—sufficiently so, I fancied, to satisfy even my uncle Toby himself.

The ruins of the two mosques, of Mesjid Ali, and the Sultan Kazan, I have already alluded to; they were upset in the great earthquake of 1559. These are the most prominent features in the way of ruins. The great Mans House is distinguished by a respectable looking door-way of brick.

The plain on, or rather *in* which the city stands is very extensive and barren; the boundaries, southern and northern, being high, rugged looking mountains, inaccessible seemingly to man and beast, and quite denuded of vegetation; and the plains bear but very partial spots here and there of garden ground. As to any thing like "chummum," or meadow, I do not recollect a patch of green herbage.

The "hummums," or baths, are numerous, but not very good. As I lay on my mat the first morning of my sojourning at Tabreez, a most discordant din greeted my ears; amongst other sounds, that of the "hummumchee," proclaiming with the cow's horn that the bath was ready for all comers. This was at the break of day. The muzzins were singing out the Azan, or call to prayers; there were the "katergis," or muleteers, braying after a stray donkey, whilst forming their

caravans, &c. Such a medley of strange sounds gave me a marvellous impression of my new residence, particularly after the smart shock of an earthquake the preceding evening.

The bazaar is a long line of buildings for shops, partly roofed in, partly covered with mats and other frail materials, all of the tumble-down decaying description. The Persians, by these frail tenements, seem to imply that there is no to-morrow for them—every thing is to serve the present moment. This long line of shops extends through the heart of the city, and becomes the thoroughfare to its different portions. Men and animals pressing against each other through a narrow road of about eight feet wide, and pushed against the walls by a donkey laden with fruit or brushwood, it is quite a struggle to get on. The noisy "Kebardar," 'take care,' at the angles where the thronging generally takes place; the dervish, singing out in the name of Ali, rattling his kettle, his tall figure towering over the rest, clothed in sheep or deers' skin, with his felted conical cap, ornamented with inscriptions from the Koran; all these form a *melange*, of which it is difficult to give a graphic description. There is sometimes the moolah on

horseback, with many followers, on his way to the Mesjid, and he meets with general respect. The road is cleared for this "father of the faithful."

The shops are of the most miscellaneous kind, though in some parts the trades are placed together. Here is the "kiabobshee," or cook, roasting his little sausages on skewers, whilst the passer by is eating these favourite dainties at the door, dipping them in "moss," or sour milk. The "dellok," or barber, is seen shaving the dirty skull of an Hummual. Close by, it may be, is seen a funeral, with the hasty tread of the bearers of the corpse, which is placed on a bier, in a striped wrapper.

Here are also the shops where they sell "guzangabeen," or manna, described to me as produced by a small insect, resembling a white thread, on the leaves of trees. From this honey is made, by being mixed with flower and water. The product is the most indigestible of all food, ycleped "manna." The Persians are very fond of sweetmeats; at most visits they are brought round as refreshments.

Nothing can be imagined more grotesque than this miscellaneous congregating in the bazaars;

the busy hum of the men of pelf, the various displays of Georgian and European manufactures, the Damascus blades, the numerous fire-arms, caps * and slippers, saddles and nummeds; the various trampers with their sweetmeats, ices, cakes, and sherberts, chaunting their invites to the passing world; then the bubbling noise of the "kaleeon," or water-pipe, and the fragrant emissions of the long tchibook—for with all their occupations this is never forgotten—the scene must be witnessed to be appreciated.

There are openings here and there from the bazaars, which lead to the caravansaras where the merchants deposit their goods. Some of them are very respectable buildings, having subterranean stabling for the horses, and "bauleh kanehs" or sleeping rooms over the shops. There was one lately built, the entire property of a merchant, which must have cost I imagine one hundred thousand tomauns; and another was in progress,

* The Astracan black lamb-skin cap is the universal head-dress in Persia, from the prince to the peasant. It was first introduced by the Kajar tribe. To obtain them in small shining curls, which is their great excellence, they kill the ewe before her yeaning, and the lamb is taken from her prematurely. Thence arise the glossy black hue which is their great beauty.

with its magnificent dome built without any centre, already alluded to.

Beyond these were workshops for the manufacture of fire-arms, brought to very respectable perfection by one of the Persian youths sent to England to acquaint himself with the art. So ingeniously had he copied a rifle of one of the London makers, that I was completely taken in by it. He had engraved the name in steel letters, and, Persian like, had sold some of them as "London guns." This he related to me with great glee, quite unabashed. "Real London," said he, "although made at Tebreez."

The sabres also were pretty good, though not equal to those of Ispahan or Damascus, either for the excellency of the material, or for the delicacy of the workmanship. A good Ispahan blade, if well welded, will, it is said, cut through a half-inch bar of iron, a bale of cotton, or a silk handkerchief thrown into the air; and this is by no means a Persian extravaganza. The Persians are great admirers of these missals, and nothing is so acceptable in the way of "peisheash," or present, as a double-barrel Joe or a pair of hair triggers.

The other manufactures cannot be said to flourish

much. Despotic governments are adverse to all improvements; for if profit be derived from them, they are sure to be taxed, and genius can never flourish where the invention meets no protection, and may be even attended with danger. The Persian who succeeds in amassing wealth unknown to the government, seeks posthumous fame by the building of caravanseries or baths, but quite unconnected with any patriotic feeling, or even for the good of mankind. The most prominent of the arts, and the one in which they so much excel, is that of enamelling; in which, in point of rich fancy of pattern and of execution, they exceed the Europeans. The exquisitely formed flower grows on the gold and silver "kalleons" and thimbles with a grace most true to nature. Of jewellery I do not recollect much display in the bazaars beyond that of the "feruzas" or tourquoises, of which the Persians are very proud; some stones being valued as high as one hundred tomauns. The most celebrated mine is at Nishapore, in Khorassan. There are others, but they yield a stone of a very inferior quality.

The merchants may be deemed the most opulent and the most independent class in Persia.

They are lightly taxed by the government, and less interfered with than others; and are so alive to their own interests, that they take care not to excite the cupidity of their rulers by any ostentatious display of wealth. Sordidness and avarice are their general characteristics—with a good deal of low cunning and caution; and so thirsty are they after gain, so over-reaching, and so shrewd in their dealings, that not a son of Israel can live amongst them. I believe I may say that Tabreez is the only city I was ever in without meeting with a Jew. I heard of a few only at Tehran, though the tribes abound amongst the Turks, where they thrive most flourishingly.

The merchants seal their bargains with their signet instead of with their signature; and the authenticity of these, and the being bound by them, depends entirely upon the seal. Hence the office of the seal cutter is one of great importance and trust; for if he is known to make duplicates, his life would answer for the offence. The date must be cut on the seal. They are all registered, and if a seal be lost, public notice is given of it by the merchant to all his dealers. They engrave beautifully, indeed with a perfection unknown to Europe.

They abbreviate the Ferengee names by leaving out the vowels, whether in contempt or compliment, I do not know.

The Aji river, a salt, muddy stream, runs through the city; but the general supply of water is good, and by means of "khanauts" it is brought from the neighbouring mountains, at considerable distance. The narrow ways or streets leading to the different habitations are positively dangerous in time of frost, or an accumulation of mud in the wet season. Occasionally a wall tumbles down, or a "khanaut" must be opened, which prevents all possible thoroughfare; and what with the ups and downs over rubbish and into water-holes, it is quite a scientific affair to get through the streets of Tabreez.

The obscure door-ways lead down by steps, or by an inclined plane, to the courts within; and it is an agreeable surprise sometimes to enter the spacious court, with its tank of water in the centre, or its well-planted garden, and to find so respectable a dwelling within. There are always two distinct courts; one of them leading to the harem, or forbidden apartments.

The simulation of the Persians amuses me much.

It is exactly the reverse of that of Ferengstan; they assume poverty, squalidness, and every other guise, as security against oppression and spoliation; whilst the Ferengees often assume wealth and importance to impose on the credulous, and to live on their credit for a time, until the trickery leads them to a gaol, or sometimes to an almshouse. You never hear of the Persians failing in business, or by extravagance falling into decay. Is not the prudence of the Persian more to be desired than the extravagance of the European?

Tabreez is situate at the foot of the Mount Orontes, in an extensive plain; it is the capital of Azerbijan, or country of the Ghebres, or fire worshippers, and was the ancient Media. It has been frequently conquered by the Turks, and their language continues to be the current one of the day. Abbas the Great, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, expelled the invaders, and permanently established the Persian rule in this province. Chardin visited it in 1672, when, from his report, it contained two hundred and forty mosques, fifteen thousand houses, fifteen thousand shops or bazaars, three hundred caravanseries, and more than half a million of inhabitants, with splendid squares,

piazzas, &c., which proclaimed it the second city in the empire. Its ancient name was Tauris, when under the Medes; but the Persians gave it the name of Tabreez in the year of the Hegira 165.

A most destructive earthquake about a century ago toppled down the greater part of this magnificent city, and is said to have entombed a hundred thousand of its inhabitants, leaving the wreck and ruins which I have partly described. Of inhabitants the present city may boast of about sixty thousand.

I found the hummums or baths in Persia very inferior to those at Smyrna or Constantinople. At the former place they were my frequent resort, and a slight description of what I found them, will apply to oriental baths generally.

Groping my way through the dark and intricate bazaars, I at length reached the scene of cleansing operations. It was a large domed building, very respectable in appearance, with steam issuing from it enough to drive a railway train. The scene on entering was most amusing; all sorts of people denuding themselves on the well stuffed benches, provided with carpets and coverings of various kinds. This was in the outer room, where, being reduced to my original state, I sat down amongst

the other *naturels*, their head gear and slippers scattered about in all directions—turbans, shawls, &c. When I speak of *turbans*, I do not mean as belonging to Musselmans, since no infidels would be allowed to pollute their baths with their unclean presence. This was a Greek bath. The Greeks wear a sort of rolled kerchief on the head, over the "fez," or red scull-cap; but as to discriminating the caste of company, who could tell of what nation they were! since Nature makes no distinction, from the monarch to the peasant, all kinds being clothed in her buff livery. It is for fantastic man to assume the purple, and other habiliments, down to that of the convict.

Here I was refreshed with coffee and pipes. Every thing in these countries is to be preceded by smoking. After some time, the hummumchee arrived from the other room, a hideous looking wretch, walking upon high wooden pattens; and as he took hold of me, I receded from his rough touch, as though he was going to scald a pig. Following him to the next room, which I will call the preparatory boiler, the steam overpowered me with a sort of paralysing effect. I had been hot enough before, but this was intended to open the

pores, and make them more facile to the shampooing operation. To retreat was impossible, so after remaining a short time, he led the way to the grand washing room, a large octagon building, very lofty, and lit from above, the echoes of its occupants playing round the roof with most amusing continuity. It appeared to me to have been originally a church, the small adjoining chapels being converted to reservoirs, steam-houses, wash-places, &c. If I found the atmosphere of the last room paralysing, how shall I describe this?

Presently my savage looking conductor laid me down on the marble slab. Resistance was useless, and I was too powerless to impede his operations, as he turned me over like a lump of breathless clay, and began to scrub unmercifully with a sort of hair-cloth glove. This he lays on to his utmost strength on the muscles and sinews, causing them to give up all their impurities. This shampooing is a curious sensation; he kneads you about with his knuckles, cracks your bones, and you feel unhinged in every part.

I writhed and sung out under the operation, much to the amusement of the operator, and this

continued for half an hour, when I was taken to one of the wash-houses, well lathered with soap, and drowned in hot water. Never was I so completely purified since the days of my swaddling clothes; and the refreshment is most luxurious, when reposing at lazy length on the benches of the outer apartment, you are clothed in soft wrappers, and coffee and pipes are again introduced to restore the inner man.

When once the operation is over, the bath is certainly a great luxury, and conducive to health; as regards the digestive powers, I found them to be wonderfully pacified by these operations. The noise from the many being shampooed at the same time was most overwhelming. There were nearly a dozen nudities running about, adding to the concert; and as the domed apartment resounded with their cries, I could neither distinguish character nor country of those being operated upon. There was a babel of sounds in this outer room, of almost all oriental languages, and the scene was very amusing.

All respectable persons are supposed to get a good washing once a week at least. They are very fashionable places of female resort. Parties

of females will spend a whole day together on this pastime.

The only natural hot bath which I have seen in Turkey is at Elidja, a small village near Erzroume.* Here the water was in the boiling state, the ground being at the time covered with snow. It was surrounded with a low mud wall, about twenty feet square. I had no opportunity of analysing the water, and whether or not it possessed mineral qualities seemed to be quite indifferent to the natives, men or cattle.

There was a similar natural bath at Teflis, in Georgia, having good buildings over it, with the necessary accommodations; and here I bathed. This is decidedly of a mineral quality, and is much resorted to by the natives under sundry maladies.

Frequent ablutions are enjoined by the Mahomedan religion, and you will scarcely find a town or village without a good supply of the hummums.

In the ruins of the Mesjid Sultan Kazan, which was built by Shah Shem Ghuzan more than six hundred years ago, are some magnificent slabs of the Tabreez marble, with which the remaining

* This bath I have already alluded to, see Chapter XVII.

walls are lined. It is of a transparent yellow colour, formed by the deposition of waters from a spring which forces its way out from the body of the cliffs; and near the village of Shirameen is the spring of chalybeate water, which, running into ponds, stagnates. A strong mineral smell proceeds from it.

The process of petrefaction is some two or three years going on, and its different stages are to be traced. At first the water appears clear, as it stagnates it becomes black, and lastly, it has the appearance of being frosted. On breaking the outer coat, before the operation is complete, it has the look of an accumulated layer of papers of different colours, with which the marble is grained—of red, green, and copper-colour, most richly streaked. It is brittle and transparent, so much so, that it is sometimes used for the windows of baths, or other buildings requiring light without outward observation. It is found perfectly consolidated some three or four feet below the surface. It was formerly exclusively used for the Shah's service, or only by special firman, to be obtained by any one else; but latterly it has been sold to the best bidders. It is used to decorate mosques and palaces; sometimes also for tablets, on which I have seen the

exquisite engravings at the tombs, so well done by the Persians. The slabs may be obtained of almost any dimensions. Those which I saw in the Mesjid were some of them twenty feet in length, and about ten feet in breadth, most beautifully polished.

The climate of Tabreez is the most salubrious I have met with in Persia. Although the scorching heat of the sun has even tried old Indians, to whom it was almost insupportable, yet there is a refreshing midday breeze, which tempers its intensity. The cold is so severe in the winter, that to sit by a large fire clothed in furs is by no means uncommon. I have never felt it so intense, except in Russia. Care must be taken to avoid the extremes in both as much as possible; a *coup de soleil* is not uncommon, with most frightful consequences; and to dig out frozen corpses from the snow occurred during my being there.

There is a class of the wandering tribes of Egypt which come almost every season, and encamp in the neighbourhood of Tabreez—

> "Hard faring race—loud when they beg,
> Dumb only when they steal."

They are prowling thieves for the time, and are detested by the Persians. The native men-

dicants are but few in Persia. Alms-giving is a most prominent trait in the Mahomedan character; total want, much less starvation, can never occur amongst them.

Tabreez is sometimes visited with the awful cholera; it devastated the city in the year 1830, and is said to have carried off between thirty and forty thousand people. The plague, too, has sometimes made great havoc at Tabreez, though from all my enquiries I do not find that it has ever raged so destructively as in Turkey. I have been assured that a remedy has been found for this "child of Nemesis." My informant was a military gentleman, long resident in Siberia, where he saw the cure effected. A bullock was slain, the patient stripped, and in complete nudity was wrapped in the warm skin of the animal, from whence he received new life, and gave up disease. How long he remained so attired I know not, but his recovery was said to be complete.

CHAPTER XX.

CARAVAN TRAVELLING.

The caravan is an assemblage of merchants and travellers congregating together for mutual protection; for there is always a certain degree of danger when going over the Turkish and Persian soil, which arises from that restless and untamable nomadic population, called Koords, who inhabit the frontiers of those countries,—despising all authority, governed by none. During my stay at Erzroume, they were flying about in all directions, taking advantage of an unarmed population, and almost to the gates of the city, committing their depredations.* Thirty travellers had just pre-

* It was formerly the custom of the Pasha of this city, on capturing any number of Koords, to send up their heads, salted, in sacks, to Constantinople, to be laid at the gate of the seraglio.

sented themselves, plundered and stripped to the skin.

There being, at length, ready about a hundred and fifty people, we formed our caravan, of the most motley group, both of man and beast, that was perhaps ever assembled. I was the only European amongst them, and consequently an object of the vacant stare of the muleteers, who always afford me much amusement. The leading camel, preceded by a donkey, was adorned with much frippery of coloured beads and bits of glass about the head and ears, the knees, and saddle housings, &c. Of this the "chaoush," or leader of the caravan, is very proud; and as it moves on at funereal pace, there is plenty of time to smoke the pipe of reflection, whilst the sound of the camel bells are sonorously issuing from the ravines. The train sometimes occupies half a mile in length; the day's travel being determined either by the pasture to be found for the cattle, which is free to all comers if it be summer, or to the village supply of provender, if in the winter. As to the travellers' accommodation, that is the last thing thought of, and to sleep with your horse is the general order of the day. I never slept better than in a

warm stable, amidst curry-comb music and clouds of dust. There is generally a small raised platform at one end of it, with a chimney, and this is "the traveller's rest." Then for provisions, bread, milk, and eggs are generally to be found; and the "muff-rush," or wallet, ought to contain rice, coffee, sugar, tobacco, &c., or one must go without them. The incidents are rather monotonous—the loading and unloading—mending the packsaddle—bivouacking—the sundry fires for cooking the pilau—the night arrangements. The muleteers have a busy time of it, catching every momentary interval for their favourite tchibook.

At Delli-Baba we fell in with the Turkish troops, and such a rank and file I suppose was never marched to Coventry—bare-legged, badly-slippered, armed and unarmed. (I should observe that at this time, the Russians were invading the Turkish territory, which made it very difficult for a Ferengee stranger to pass on). The moment they saw me, "Ruski" was sounded out, and all the village was in alarm, dogs included, and I was immediately surrounded by rank and file. They thought I was "spying out the nakedness of the land," and nothing was more probable amongst the

ignoramuses, who knew not English from "Ruski;" in fact, they have but one term for all Europeans—Ferengee. What was to be done? I sat quietly on my horse, laughing both with and at them. They eyed and pulled me about to see if I was of the same species with themselves, grinning through their leathern coutenances at having made of me "lawful prize."

In the mean time the village divan was summoned, the Agha, or chief, presided, and the colonel of the troops was one of the leading members. I never could find out whether I was tried judicially or court-martially. My friend, the Khan, was amongst them, urging and arguing for my release, and threatening them with his high displeasure, in case they detained me. How that displeasure was to have been expressed I never heard, since we were only five or six of us against a whole village, and rank and file I do not know how many.

I was at length called in, and astonished to find myself of such importance, making quite a noise in the Turkish world. The divan was assembled in a hot stable, with air holes here and there to emit Turkish effluvia, which was of a very varied

quality, including tobacco smoke. I had therefore some difficulty to discover how many were the gentlemen of the jury; I think there must have been fifty squatting down on the straw and dung, amongst whom I came in with all possible *nonchalance*, throwing my whip about, as much as to say, "who dares to affront me."

I squatted myself near to the Agha, and laughed to the Khan, and said, "What is going on?—I'll not remain here any longer." "Stop," said he, "no such hurry;" and then explained, what I was before ignorant of—my being taken for a "Rusky" spy. Most fertile in expedients, I never saw him daunted by difficulties, and after adopting a variety of arguments to endeavour to persuade them to the contrary, he hit upon it that I was an Elchee, carrying important dispatches into Persia. This gave quite a new turn to the affair, for the name of Elchee is always respected amongst this people.

It was somewhat surprising to me to find myself travelling in the diplomatic line; and though I could not quite understand it, yet the Turks certainly did; and then, as if wanting to confirm this statement, they asked, "what was the news con-

tained in my dispatches." This was a poser even to the fertile Khan; however, he recovered himself, and said, "it was as much as his head was worth to communicate their contents, but that they were of great importance." I was then immediately established in their high consideration; the tide of contempt had turned into the tide of respect. The Agha took his pipe from his mouth and offered it to me, which is the pledge of friendship. I had nothing for it but to put it to my mouth, which I thought was paying dear enough for his friendship. Had I declined doing so, it would have been a declaration of war. The members of the divan seeing this, immediately moved off, and I, with all possible official importance, made my way through the crowded villagers; one held my stirrup, another my bridle-rein, and I galloped off with the Khan to overtake the caravan, which had preceded us.

At another village we found an assemblage of similar troops, and we went to pay our respects to the colonel, whom we found in a stable, smoking, and giving his orders to a numerous train of bare-legged soldiers surrounding the door. He was very polite. The Khan put him in good humour

by saying the "Ruskis were fast going to Jehanum," at which he laughed, crying out "Mash allah." He ordered a stable to be cleaned out for us, and came to pay us a visit, being anxious, it appeared, for another gazette. We received him amidst curry-comb and horse-dust. I established myself in the manger, which was rather capacious; the colonel smoked with us one or two pipes, and then took his leave. The pipe-bearer is a most important personage, and is first on the staff, in preference, I imagine, to the adjutant-general.

Leaving the stable odours at three o'clock the next morning, we went to rejoin the caravan, which had gathered on its way to about double the original complement of men and beasts, there being, I should think, three hundred of each, the latter comprising camels, mules, donkeys, and buffaloes. There were muleteers, camelteers, merchants, and travellers, and I the only Ferengee amongst them, issuing out of the dell with most amusing confusion. One silver star lit up the scene, and that which of all things surprises an ignorant people, the "star shoots," were most

numerous,* as we passed a rocky bed on which the stream was pouring down in foaming haste; men and cattle, almost in the dark, groping about in various detachments—the muleteers halooing, the camel bells ringing, and sending their long echoes through the valleys.

The scene was so perfectly original, and the incidents so amusing, that it requires a much more graphic pen than mine to bring them to light. When the "eye-lids of the morning" were opened, and "Nature had put off her night clothes," the interest of the scene was much increased; there was the heavy laden ass rolling down the steep, load and all, into the stream below; while the horse, disengaging himself from his burden, was making off to the delights of freedom.

It was an amusing sight to witness the long train of the caravan clambering over the hills for more

* The falling stars, or meteors, are considered by the Persians to be the blows of angels on the heads of devils who would pry into Paradise. The fall of the angels in heaven they attribute to their being informed of God's intention to create man after his own image, and to dignify human nature by Christ's assuming it. Some of them thinking their glory to be eclipsed, envied man's happiness, and so revolted.

than a mile in length,—the muleteers sounding out their discordant notes, the noise of which was enough, I thought, to frighten the camels. They are a patient, joyous sort of people, these muleteers, though but little removed from the cattle, in their food or attire;—they eat barley as well as the horse, they sleep in the same stable with the horse, their jacket is of the roughest possible cloth, their feet tied up in bags with rope sandals; and yet withal they are cheerful and happy; only give them a pipe of tobacco, and they will kiss the hem of your garment.

Under the mountains of Dehar we bivouacked. The cattle were turned adrift to find their own food. Our hammock was formed by bales of goods, piled around as a sort of protection from the wandering donkeys. Here our carpets were spread, and the various groups, with about twenty fires burning on the ground, black camelteers, with their white turbans, swarthy looking Persians, all occupied in cooking their pilau, tying up their sandals, or mending the pack-saddles:—it was a very busy scene, and strictly oriental. I fancied at first that I should have no sleep, as on laying down I saw only "the spacious firmament on

high," splendidly lit up with "Nature's brilliants;" but I soon found out that

> "———————— Weariness
> Can snore upon the flint, when restless sloth
> Finds the down pillow hard."

The next morning we progressed toward Toprach Kalch; when in view of the fort, a gun was fired to announce horsemen in the distance.

I have had much experience in caravan travelling, having spent countless hours in this pastime. On looking over my Journal, I find myself on the mountains of Teches, the celebrated pass of the "ten thousand." The ascent had been long and steep; the loaded cattle climbed the hills with great difficulty, and we had passed through forests of the rhododendron, with here and there the most beautiful sloping lawns, lit up by a brilliant sun, which contrasted with the dark foliage of the fir and the brown beech skirting the hill-tops. It was indeed a bright page of wild uncultivated nature. The rhododendron fed the bees whose honey poisoned the Greeks; and I understand that the flower of this plant is equally noxious.

Historic recollections now crowded upon me as I reached the place where Xenophon and his fol-

lowers first saw the sea, the object which could alone pacify a grumbling soldiery after their long and disastrous retreat. The spot was beautiful. As I gave a parting glance at the sea,—here, thought I, stood Xenophon, with his immortal band, in sight of the goal of his toils and dangers, the relation of which by the historian is so animating! What must then the reality have been? I stood on the very rock from whence the sea first gladdened his longing eyes. There can be no doubt of its identity; geography never changes in this country; it is called "the mountain of the ten thousand." It was a very narrow pass, scarcely to be deemed a bridle-path—I speak of the very summit—with mountain boundaries of fanciful shapes, here and there clothed with snow. There was a sort of gloomy majesty in the solitary grandeur, disturbed only by the towering eagles, many of which I saw of an enormous size.

I love these ups and downs in the world; they are pleasanter to me than the smooth path. Nor does this apply to travelling *merely*; there were many objects of interest in this spot, independent of nature's grandeur. On a towering peak on our left stood some remains of a Genoese castle, famed

as the rendezvous of the crusaders, who were led on by Peter the Hermit. I was interested in tracing fragments mixed up with the history of the times of Cœur de Lion. A German *savant*, Dr. Schultz, an *employé* of the French government, whose acquaintance I had made at Constantinople, scaled many of the walls of these ruins, and copied inscriptions. Most of the characters, as he told me, were "arrow headed:" he made many valuable discoveries.* I had no time to devote to moulder-

* The name of Schultz demands from me a momentary tribute to his memory. To collect antiquities in the east, and to make researches in the Oriental languages, he was sent out by the French government. Travelling difficulties assailed him from the first, in consequence of the then existing war between Persia and Russia: from Erzroume he was driven back by the plague; at Teflis he was detained six months by fever, and at length he reached Tabreez in June 1829, after three years' journeyings to and fro, and I was the first to welcome him to that city. In the following October he set out for Roumia, which is partly inhabited by the Nassuramees, a sect of the Nestorian Christians of the most ancient race, and possessing many books and writings very interesting to an antiquary; it is partly inhabited by Koords also, but neither of them owe allegiance to Turks nor Persians. The chief of the Koords at Djulamenek is the descendant of the ancient Caliphs of Bagdad, and pretends a claim to the throne of Turkey. These people live contentedly in their own country, which is almost inaccessible. They are very jealous of any one coming amongst them, particularly Franks: this was at a moment too when the Russians were extending their conquests near to this

columns—the caravan never waits for antiquaries; by me the dust which buried them was not rubbed off. There is nothing surprises the Turks so much as to see the Ferengee climbing old walls, turning up grave-stones, and ripping open, as it were, the womb of gone-by time. What does *he* know about antiquities! who has no idea of any age beyond that of his grandfather, and is as well acquainted with Alexander the Great as with Alexander the coppersmith.

country. Dr. Schultz, contrary to the advice of all his friends, would go to the town of Djulamenek; he was very well received, and treated with much hospitality by the chief, who appointed him an escort to return, intimating that the roads were dangerous. On arriving at the confines of their territory, he was shot in the back by his own escort, and, with some of his people, died on the spot; another made his escape to Tabreez with the melancholy intelligence, where it created great sensation. The Prince declared that he would take vengeance on the barbarians, but I never heard that he did so. The poor doctor was much esteemed by all who knew him, possessing as he did such a fund of closet and worldly knowledge. Ardent in his pursuit of antiquities, neither mountains nor ravines checked him, and he would climb a time-shriven pillar with all the energy of a Syntax, to decypher a motto, or to copy a hieroglyphic. I trust that his papers have been preserved, and that the public may yet be gratified by the publication of his interesting researches. Amongst them was a specimen of the Koordish Gospels, in the translation of which Bishop Schevrir, at Roumia, was also engaged, as well as the Acts and Epistles in Koordish.

In a little nook of friendly shelter, we sat down to discuss our breakfast, not amounting even to "a salad and an egg," as Cowper says, but a few nuts, some apples, and a morsel of bread—our thirst slaked from a neighbouring brook. What matters it, so that the chinks are filled up and nature satisfied!

At one place we were attended by a guard of Turks, where the defile was considered dangerous. Our bare-legged cohort looked very fierce, carrying short clumsy guns, which occasionally, in those rocky passes where banditti might possibly lurk, they would discharge, the reverberating sounds from which echo took up, and sent from rock to rock with amusing continuity. We had from fifteen to twenty of them scattered through the caravan; and as I never failed to be an object of interest amongst them, I cultivated their acquaintance as well as I could by some little presents in the way of tobacco, and had always one or two at my side, chaunting away their wild notes, and looking upon me, I thought, more as a hostage than a free traveller. I have some lurking partiality for this wilderness life; though I know nothing about crowds and etiquette in what is called "the great

world." Give me the greater world, whose canopy is heaven—whose bounds are boundless!

> " Are not the mountains, waves and skies
> A part of me, and of my soul, as I of them?
> Is not the love of these deep in my heart,
> With a pure passion? ——"

I will here add a few miscellaneous recollections from my journal. I find myself at Avajek, the frontier station between Persia and Turkey. There is always danger at this pass from the Koords, who are hovering about in all directions. Being quite alone on this occasion, I brought a letter of acquaintance to the Khan of the village, who could neither speak nor write Persian. I should observe that since the Turkish invasion of Persia, their language has never been withdrawn from it; on the contrary, in the whole of ancient Media it is the most generally spoken. The Meerza soon arrived, who was eyes and tongue to the Khan, and I was taken into favour, a stable cleared out for me, and such supplies ordered in as the humble village would afford.

My demand for escort was granted, and amounted to some fifteen men; these were fierce looking mountaineers, being Koords, and as they were

drilled in before me, for my approval, I was struck with their grotesque appearance; they were well armed, and seemed fully prepared, as I thought, for any sort of prey that might offer—even those whom they were appointed to convoy, in case there was no other. However, it will not do to mistrust those whose protection you seek; so marshalling my little band, I took the centre, assuming all possible importance, and thus we dashed off for the mountains.

The wild features of this rocky district it is rather difficult to depict; they were not exactly those which I have previously described, but had a sort of savage hue repulsive to man and beast. Here the bandit finds his hiding-place, here the wild Koord, "his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him," wages war against his fellows; and slowly surmounting the towering passes, you expect a surprise every moment, of that uncourteous kind which the strong make against the feeble, the armed upon the defenceless. I kept my eye steadily fixed upon my guards; one of them I strongly suspected, who had a stubby beard,—which to me is indicative of a bad soil. On arriving at a difficult ravine, he fired a gun, which

was answered by a party below; helter-skelter off they ran—and I was left alone, like a partridge on the mountains.

I am just now at the bottom of the Koflan Khu, already spoken of as dividing Irak Adjemi from ancient Media. After a precipitate descent, having to cross a crumbling bridge over the muddy river of the Kizzil-ozzan, our way lay through some rich pasturage, and finally by a fine beaten road to the village of Arkand. Here was a good menzil or post-house, the water was abundant, and this was a promise of every thing else in the way of provisions. It was at this village formerly that an ambassador met with so rough a reception, and was actually beaten out of it with all his party; the villagers not only refused them supplies, but kept them off by force of arms. The Persian custom has always been for the foreign ambassadors and distinguished strangers to travel with a "sadir," or order from the Shah, to furnish him and his suite with forage, and all other necessaries on the road, addressed to the different Khans and Ketkodehs of the villages through which they may pass, such travellers being attended by a "mehmandar," or

conductor, bearing this sadir, and whose duty it is to procure the supplies, and to pass them on their journey. These mehmandars are so very arbitary and oppressive, that they drive the poor villagers sometimes into rebellion, even against majesty's order. They not only levy the requisites, but so much beyond it, that they make a large profit of their journey;—such a temptation to plunder is almost irresistible to the Persians. How far this mehmandar had been known to the villagers I cannot say, but they mounted the roofs of their houses well armed, and absolutely kept him at bay and all his suite, and the insult thus shown to the ambassador, the Persian government had not the power to redress. Fine promises were made of extirpating these "sons of burnt fathers," but nothing was done—the usual mode of settlement in this country.

This village showed dreadful waste, caused by plague a year or two before; it appeared to contain more ruins than tenements; the crumbling walls were becoming "dust to dust," and gaunt-eyed Desolation seemed to have driven her ploughshare through it. The remaining villagers were cheerful, for there is great elasticity in the Persian character.

The caravanseries in Persia are of a very miscellaneous description. Some of them have been built and endowed by private persons, for the Persians are very ambitious of posthumous fame; and their desire of acquiring this leads them to build caravanseries, which are consecrated to hospitality and a refuge for the stranger—some of them heavy, massive buildings, put together seemingly to defy time. The most respectable which I have yet seen is near the Sibley Pass, said to have been built by Shah Abbas, who was famous for his public works in Persia, particularly for the great causeway which runs from Keskar,[1] at the south-west corner of the Caspian, to Asterabad, a distance of more than three hundred English miles. This caravansery was of brick-work, massive in the extreme, and the arches of that beautiful symmetry which so characterises Persian masonry. It was of an immense extent; I lost myself in its intricacies; and very dark, being lit only by air-holes here and there, which admitted but little light. At the door the smith was making shoes for all comers, and he seemed to have plenty to do. The keeper of this huge-looking prison, who expects a small fee, has generally a room fitted up for himself, and he waits upon travellers.

. Water was abundant here. I do not recollect finding any thing else at this Traveller's Rest. At Sershem there were some remains only, but of great original extent and good architecture. I climbed the walls, hoping to find some nook within them habitable, if it was only for a breakfast; but withering Desolation had so completely made it her own, that it was strictly inhospitable to man or beast. Persia offers many other similar remains by the road-side, intended to shelter the houseless, and as earnests of that hospitality enjoined by the Koran; such buildings having, in most cases, been erected at the expense of some good Musselman. The caravanseries within the towns are of a superior description to these. I have described the one at Kazvine, where I lay for ten days; there was another at Zenjen, not so good, but habitable. But the Turkish caravanseries are still worse. I have met with them on the most desolate places, at Ordessa, &c. a ruin of mud, not a human habitation near them, nor a being to welcome you, not even a cat. I was infected with the feeling of desolation, and could exclaim with the Persian poet, "What is the world but a caravansery, where each man occupies his chamber for a season?"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE "EDE Y NU ROOZ."

WHO can determine that knotty point as to what season of the year "the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Even our immortal bard admits "for man to tell how human life began, is hard." The Persians contend for the 21st of March, the feast of the vernal equinox, and the anniversary of the elevation of Ali to the Caliphat. Their year of twelve months contains each thirty days; they add to them five complimentary days for the common year, and six for the bissextile. Hence their great veneration for New Year's day. This festival was formerly observed by the fire worshippers, and it is the only one which has

survived the days of the Ghebres among the Mahomedans.

The Persian writers say that "God on this day began the creation, and ordered the different planets to move in their respective orbits." No specific season being revealed to us in the Mosaic account of "the beginning," some writers say that even Adam himself kept the "Nu Rooz" on the 21st of March; they say also that on this day Noah descended from the ark, therefore they call it "the feast of the waters."

I am quite disposed to think that this is the proper day for the "Nu Rooz." It is the first of the spring season, the winter being over, and Nature evidently rejoicing in her regeneration. It appears to me to be a much more rational observance of the new year's festival than the gloomy season chosen by the Europeans. * Adam describes it with "each tree loaden with fairest fruit," and when "all things smiled." This is

* The new year was so observed in England, viz., on the 25th March, then called "the old or Julian mode of computation," until the year 1752, at which period Gregory I. reformed the calendar, whereby the year was calculated from the 1st January, when an Act of Parliament was passed to adopt the Gregorian calendar in England.

evidently the season when Nature renews her strength; the teeming earth bursts with her vegetable produce, the feathered choristers chaunt their hallelujahs to the God of all creation, and even animal life quickens.

I have much enjoyed this day in Persia, but in the drizzly, frigid climate which we inhabit I question if the sensations of delight can be so lively as under the animating rays of an oriental sun. Such is the power of the animal over the mental system, that the Persian (the Frenchman of the East) knows nothing of that torpidity and langour of the brain so peculiar to "the Englishman of the West."

The "Ede y nu Rooz" is distinguished by a series of fêtes, which continue nearly a week. Chardin's description of them applies to the present day—that it is one of the grandest of the Persian festivals, when, from the prince to the peasant, all must be happy, or appear to be so. The relations of life are renewed (if I may so say) by family ties, friendly ties, and numerous other ties, known only at this time. Then the sequestered haremite comes off her carpet, and bedizened in the costly trappings conferred by her lord,

exchanges courtesies with other splendid prisoners, all happy in that seeming vacuity of existence, which may be likened more to animal than to spiritual life, kissing and embracing each other, with their "Ede y shuma mobarek"—"May the festival be propitious to you!" Even the men express their congratulations in the same manner. All seem inspired with the sensations of our first parents—"With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed."

The servants are clothed in their new liveries; business is partially suspended; nothing whatever is done by the government authorities for three days at least. The bazaars are deserted, and one general surrender to the dissipation of idle visits seems to pervade all classes.

These visits are very amusing, until they become tiresome with the overflowing bowls of flattery administered from one to the other, the "chum y chum," or compliments, so liberally dealt out, the sending and receiving the "peiscush," or presents. This latter is the most important part of the ceremony; for with all their external civilities, each person expects to receive more than he gives; and here is a fine scope for intrigues amongst the ser-

vants, who profit by these exchanges. I like this custom of their *souvenirs* to each other, though not the motive which actuates them. Such little courtesies enhance somewhat "the poetry of life," taking off the edges of its "dull realities"—the former so little known, and the latter so predominant, in my native country, whose people are so noted by foreigners for their frigidity.

The King on this day holds his court, attended by the numerous "shah zadehs," or princes of his family–a score or two–as many as can conveniently leave their respective governments. Then the Khans, the ministers, the foreign ambassadors (if any at the time are at the capital) all wait on the "Shah Padi Shah," "the Centre of the Universe, the Cousin of the Sun and Moon," for permission "to rub their foreheads at the gate of almighty splendour." From a large vase filled with gold and silver coins the royal bounty is scattered to his favourite sons and courtiers, but is intended to produce abundant interest, since they are baits of invitation merely to the liberality of his subjects.

Voluntary taxation was the only source of revenue in Persia until the time of Darius, who first imposed other tribute. Hence he is called "Darius

the merchant." It was in his reign that money was first coined in Persia, called "Darics." It now forms, perhaps, a third of the ordinary revenues; and although Persian politeness both gives and takes it as voluntary offerings, yet I understand that no exactions can be more severe. His Majesty obtains full information of the revenues of his different Khans and ministers, and expects from them their due proportions. In order to continue to bask in the royal favour, or to maintain their governments, an emulation is excited amongst them to excel each other in their "Nu Rooz" offerings. The niggard is displaced, and the liberal tramples him down; the royal squeeze must be followed by the governors squeezing the poor "ryots" or peasantry. Through these different sluices all comes tó the royal coffer at last.

The Shah's splendour on these grand occasions has been described to me as perhaps the most gorgeous display in the world. The immense riches of the crown jewels would buy a kingdom; on his "musnud" or throne, he seems made up of diamonds, pearls, and all the sparkling stones of the world. No subject in Persia is allowed to wear jewels; not even the Shah's sons. It may be al-

most said, therefore, that all the costly treasures of Persia are heaped upon his Majesty.

Numerous fêtes succeed each other during the seven days that the festival lasts. The first of these, however, is the most important.

Beyond the small gold and silver coins with which his Majesty deigns to honour his subjects, he presents to the most distinguished, or the most liberal, "kalaats," or dresses of honour. These are generally of shawls of different qualities and value. The bestowing of these dresses is a very ancient usage in Persia, and is one of the many biblical customs which may still be traced in this country. Thus was Mordecai honoured by Haman at the King's command, and Jonathan to show his love to David, "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David." So also in the days of King Solomon: "And they brought every man his presents; vessels of silver, vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses and mules, a rate year by year."*

His Majesty's bounty in this respect was said to amount to nearly a thousand "kalaats" annually, not one of which cost him any thing, since he

* 1 Kings x. 25.

makes requisitions on the towns of Kerman and other districts to supply the necessary shawls for that purpose.

"The object of the world's regard" being seated on his throne, the observance of ceremonies and court etiquette is said to be the strictest in the world; the least deviation from it would be deemed almost criminal. The princes, courtiers, &c., who approach in erect position with their hands crossed, watch the royal looks; his glance is a command, his frown may be death; and should they be addressed by the Shah, such is the fearful respect entertained for him, you scarcely hear their reply.

Such forms and ceremonies are deemed essential not only to the glory but to the power of the sovereign, and the least deviation from them would be deemed insubordination to his government, and visited with immediate punishment. Of these court ceremonies we have a very interesting report from Sir John Malcolm, in his own presentation to the late Shah of Persia.

"The arrival of a foreign embassy is one of those occasions in which the King of Persia should appear in all his grandeur. The foreign minister advances with his suite and escort to one of the

interior gates of the palace; the moment he reaches the precincts of the royal abode, all is complete silence—the horses even, as if trained to the scene, scarcely move their heads. When announced, he is conducted into a small apartment, where he is met by one of the principal officers of government; after being seated there some minutes, the King is announced to be on the throne, and the ambassador proceeds to the hall of audience. From the throne to the entrance of the garden, the princes, ministers, courtiers, and royal guards, are arranged in their respective ranks; but the splendid appearance of the officers is eclipsed in a moment when the eye glances at the sovereign, whose throne and dress are covered with the richest jewels. As the ambassador advances between two officers, whose gold enamelled wands are the insignia of their high station, he is twice required to make an obeisance. When near the throne, the lord of requests pronounces his name, and that of the ruler by whom he is sent. The King says in reply, "You are welcome," and the foreign minister proceeds to take his seat in the same room, but at some distance from the King. If the ambassador has any presents to offer, they

are (however rich) received without any appearance of gratification, for the most extraordinary work of art must not appear to excite surprise, nor to fix the attention of the monarch when they are publicly presented: the forms of his condition require that he should conceal any joy or wonder till he can indulge in it without restriction."

Not having attended the ceremonies of the "Ede y nu Rooz" at Tehran, I will briefly borrow from those who have, on the occasion of a foreign ambassador being presented. "The ambassador and his suite entered into the court where the King gives his solemn audiences, conducted by the master of the ceremonies. This court, or rather garden, is called the 'Gulistan,' or rose bed. It is a parallelogram, of about three hundred paces long, by one hundred and fifty wide, shaded with beautiful plane trees, and planted with roses, jessamine, and all kinds of flowers. An oblong basin divides it into two equal parts; several little fountains rise in the centre, and its borders were covered with fruits and refreshments, in gold and silver dishes, and in vases of China porcelain. The nobles were standing ranged and in silence, at distances more or less near the throne, according

to their rank; the 'shah zadehs,' or princes, were also standing, and placed according to their ages.

"When we had made three profound bows, we were requested to take places below those princes, and the King then invited the ambassador to approach him, when the latter advanced into the hall near his throne. This hall is at the end of the garden, and almost on a level with the ground; it is lined all over with looking glasses, gildings, and Persian paintings. The King wore a tiara sparkling with diamonds, and was surrounded with all the attributes of royalty. His Majesty was seated on a pedestal of white marble, enriched with gold, and supported behind by a cushion, embroidered with fine pearls; he wore bracelets of precious stones, in the midst of which shone the 'derai nowr,' or sea of light, one of the largest diamonds known; he smoked from a 'kaleoon,' shining with emeralds and rubies; the principal officers of his household, ranged round the throne, pompously displayed all the court jewels, in gold and silver gilt dishes.

"I confess I had never seen a more magnificent spectacle. It was the first time we could contemplate one of the most powerful monarchs of Asia

in his glory, and it was no longer possible to doubt of those immense riches of which the Persians so often spoke to us. There is not the least exaggeration in the account I give you of this imposing ceremony. Add the brilliancy of a beautiful day, and that of the sun's rays at noon reflected in a thousand ways from this prodigious heap of gold, silver, and jewels, and you will still have but a faint idea of what we saw on this occasion.

" The ambassador having pronounced a short address, which was translated into Persian, the master of the ceremonies came forward to fill his hands with new pieces of gold and silver money, according to an ancient custom practised at this court. Its object is to remind the receiver that the King is the sole dispenser of the wealth of his kingdom, and that he distributes or withdraws it at his pleasure. This is, in fact, the real triumph of despotism.

" We were next served with ice sherbet. The ceremony was concluded by a long oration, addressed to the King by his chief moolah; the most extravagant praises and hyperboles, which are the common flowers of the oriental style, were not spared, so that his Majesty, if fond of incense

received a large supply, and might enjoy it at his leisure.

" Six days after, the ambassador and all the legation were again invited by the King to the festival at which the governors of provinces present their 'peiscush,' or voluntary tributes. This ceremony takes place in the first court of the royal palace. The governor of Khorassan was the first who presented himself; he bowed profoundly before the King, his father, and presented fifty superb horses of his province, an equal number of mules and camels, Cachemere shawls, several bags of tourquoises, &c. The latter objects were on broad wooden trays, carried by the officers of his household. After these presents had passed before the King, they were sent into the interior of the palace. The governor of Kerman sent his offering by his vizier; it consisted of Cachemere shawls; arms, such as lances, muskets, pistols; and a great number of camels laden with carpets and fine felts. The vizier of the governor of Mazanderan then presented in the name of his master more Cachemere shawls, stuffs of gold, silver, and silk, wooden spoons of delicate workmanship, arms, camels, and mules. Those of the governor of Farestan were

also remarkable in their kind; amongst other objects we saw a great quantity of sugar and syrups, mules and camels laden with coffee and tumbako, or smoking tobacco, from Shirauz.

"But the tribute of the beglerbeg of Ispahan surpassed all the former in magnificence. Besides superb Turkoman horses and rich stuffs, it also included that precious metal so eagerly sought by all mankind, and for which the King of Persia is said to have a decided predilection. Fifty mules, ornamented with Cachemere shawls and streamers, carried each one thousand tomauns in money, a sum equal to about £45,000.

"Every year at this season these presents are received, and by this an idea may be formed of the immense riches which the private treasures of the King of Persia must contain. Games of all kinds succeeded to the presentations of the tributes, which were sent into the King's palace as they passed in review before his Majesty. These consisted of men running on stilts; others performing feats of strength and balancing, turning on the slack rope, or carrying on their heads a pile of earthen pots, surmounted with a vase of flowers; then dancing, and combats of rams that were ex-

cited against each other. These exercises were followed by rope dancing, performed by young children; these dancers are called in Persian, 'djanbaz,' meaning him who plays, or risks his soul. This expression, contemptuous in itself, intimates that games of this kind are discouraged by religion, and is nearly synonymous with that of excommunication.

"Naked men armed with maces, and wrestlers, appeared before the King. The first resembled savages; they struck their clubs together, but without injuring each other. It was not so with the second: their combats have something so revolting and hideous that I am loth to mention it. The conqueror, that is to say, he who succeeded in throwing his adversary on his back, went to the foot of the 'kiosk' to receive a piece of money, which the King threw down to him.

"The King retired for half an hour to say his evening prayer, and then returned for the fireworks; they extended over all the great court of the palace, which is three hundred paces long and five hundred broad, also on some of the terraces that surrounded. They commenced with the Bengal flames, which had a very fine effect; then they

let off in confusion a prodigious quantity of cases of crackers and rockets. Suns, figures of men and animals, trees and houses of fire, every instant presented new scenes, and there was nothing wanting but more order and symmetry, to render the spectacle magnificent.

"The next day was appropriated to horse-racing. At six o'clock in the morning we left the city to proceed unto the plain of Tehran, where the King's tent had previously been pitched. Futtee Ali Shah soon appeared; he was in a military dress, and accompanied by several of his sons. The march was opened with "zambrooks," being small cannons carried on camels, and by four elephants ornamented with red trimmings, and carrying towers or pavillions, gilded and lined with looking-glasses. When the King alighted to enter his tent, a general discharge of the "zambrooks" was fired, and horsemen, magnificently dressed and armed in the antique style, started into the midst of the area, to perform a species of tournament until the races should begin. The horses admitted to the competition had departed the day before; some of them had to run a space of three furseks (fifteen miles) in an hour and a half; others one

fursek in half an hour. Prizes were reserved for the winners; the first amounting to one hundred tomauns, the second to fifty, the third to ten. The horses were rode by children, dressed merely in a shirt, pantaloons, and a handkerchief on their heads. According as they reached the winning-post, the names of the persons to whom they belonged were proclaimed. The King's horses gained, as they ought, the first prize.

"After the race, the Shah was seated on his throne, covered with gold and silver enamelled; a vase of flowers ornamented each of the arms of his seat. He wore a tikmé of blue velvet embroidered with fine pearls, and a cap of Astracan lambskin. The interior of the tent was lined with stuffs of gold and silver; there were several mirrors in it, a rich cushion embroidered with pearls, and a portrait of a female in embroidery. The princes, ranged in a line before the King according to age, were leaning on large bows, and had leaden quivers on their shoulders; the richness of their dresses, and their bracelets sparkling with precious stones, produced a very imposing effect, which was heightened by the brilliancy of a beautiful day. Below these princes stood two officers of the palace, one

of whom carried the mace, and the other the large shield of the King, both enriched with emeralds and rubies.

" To show the expertness of one of the young princes, of seven or eight years' old, the Shah ordered him to shoot several arrows at an object he pointed out to him; the young prince obeyed, and discharged a score of them at the running footmen ranged in a file before the elephants. Though his strength did not allow him to reach them, the attitude and looks of the servants did not the less betray fear and inquietude; at each arrow they were seen bowing the head, then raising and lowering it again; but from respect to the King, none of them attempted to quit his place. This amusement, though savouring rather too much of the practical joke, was at length terminated. We afterwards separated from his Majesty, who soon remounted his horse to return to the palace. Thus ended this festival."

CHAPTER XXII.

ABBAS MEERZA.

I HAD once the hónour to be invited to wait on his late Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Persia. "Surely," said I, "my face shall be whitened, and my consequence increased, now that I am to bask in the sunshine of royalty!" So mounting the stirrup of impatience, and being goaded with the spur of novelty, I bounded off with my friend and interpreter the Khan, and made my way to the "dhur khaneh," or palace gate.

All visits in the East must be made on horseback, be the distance ever so short;* and when a

* It is customary to precede it with a present. I was honoured with a kalaat by the Prince, which was taken from me by the Koords.

Khan goes out, he is attended by his "peesh waz," or road clearer; one man bears his pipe, another his slippers, the third his "baula poosh," and so on. His dignity much depends on the number of his servants, to be increased by the running footmen, as many as you can muster, one at each rein, and the remaining "ambulants" bringing up the rear. Pick them up by the way, no matter who, so that you arrive at the "dhur khaneh" heavily attended. I have seen the "beglerbeg," or mayor of the town, arrive with nearly a hundred followers, of every class and description. He would set out with some twenty or thirty, increasing as he went on; and as to any thing like livery, bare legs, sheep-skins, and slippers, came the nearest to uniformity—I speak of the "accumulated extraordinaries." His own servants, particularly the "peish kedmets," or body men, are well dressed, the Persians being very vain in this respect.

Arrived at the "maidan," or large square in front of the Prince's palace, I saw nothing externally to indicate the residence of royalty, except some small display of tile engravings over the door, and some congregated masses of all sorts of people, humbly waiting the fiat of the Naib ul

Sultanat, which might possibly affect their tongues, or even their heads. The plain brick arched vestibule, without even a coat of mortar, led to a long passage of the same material, the ups and downs of which were such as, without due care, might cost one a bone's dislocation. This conducted to an enclosed court, filled with applicants and implorants, waiting to reach the threshold of justice.

In a small ante-room, well carpeted, we had to wait for some time, until the ceremonial of our introduction was ready. There I sat upon "the carpet of patience, and smoked the pipe of expectation," until at length the "yassawal," or master of the ceremonies, arrived to say that the Prince was ready to grant us audience. We had then to cross the garden to the inner apartments, where the Prince was sitting. It was a plain looking building, with windows almost to the ground. The "deewan khaneh," in which he receives people on state occasions, was richly carpeted, and nummeds, or long narrow carpets, were laid on each side, for the visitors to range themselves according to their rank, which is indicated by the stations which they occupy on the nummed.

Within this room was his "khelwat," or small closet, as it appeared to me, in which was the Prince, sitting in an English chair.

Keeping on my hat, and doffing my slippers, I accompanied the Khan, who on entering made his "serferoo," or obeisance, and I, of course, did the same; then we approached a few steps, bowed again; and having arrived within about six feet of his Royal Highness, made serferoo the last, more profound, with all the humility which I could assume. The Khan was afraid I should laugh out, for after sundry previous practisings, he found me a very unapt scholar; however, I behaved pretty well.

The Prince said, "Kushamadeed,"—"you are welcome—your place has long been empty. I was very desirous to see you;" and then with rapid utterance, not at all waiting for my rejoinders, with which I was well charged, and wanted to deliver myself of, he enquired my name, of my travels, how I liked Persia, talked so rapidly, and introduced such extraordinary sundries, that I had great difficulty to find pause for my maiden speech, which was ready cut and dried—the practice, I believe, of all maiden speeches.

THE AUTHOR INTRODUCED TO ABBAS MEERZA

At length I said, through my interpreter, that I had heard much of his Royal Highness's name in my own country, for the condescension and courteous urbanity with which he had been pleased to receive English visitors at Tabreez, particularly our missionary Martin, by whom it was noted in his journal;—how highly honoured I felt, "who was less than the least," at this proof of his Royal Highness's condescension. "Barikallah," said the Prince, and at intervals, "Laullah e illulluh!" "there is no God but God!" but what this had to do with my audience, I could never understand. His Royal Highness went on with a long string of talk, enquiring if I could speak Persian, &c.

The "chum y chum," or compliments, being over, the Prince said that he had great respect for the English nation, having received warm friendship from them, which he should never forget. He added, "the Persians and English are one,"—which is deemed a great compliment in Persia, and however I might have ventured to differ in opinion, of course I durst not express it.

Amongst other subjects, his Royal Highness alluded to the late war with Russia, saying, that

the real events of this war were never known to the English nation, and referred to an article of the treaty, No. 15, which had not been observed by the Russians. Having talked politics for some time longer, when his Royal Highness signified his pleasure that we might retire; so salaaming it backward three times, with "May his Royal Highness's condescension never be less," I resumed my slippers and retreated with the Khan, with every deferential respect.

Having already spoken of Abbas Meerza, I will only add of this princely person, that he was about forty years' old; rather above the ordinary stature, of an originally very fine form and countenance, with dark penetrating eyes, full of intelligence, though clouded a little, I thought, by the cares of state;—but sufficient were the remains of his former self to say that he must have been a fine specimen of the Kajars. His manners were easy, and his whole appearance dignified; his dress was unostentatious, his robes of cashmere shawl, trimmed with silver, his "kanjar," or knife, sparkling with brilliants, but having on his head simply the black Astracan cap. He had been

governor of the province of Azerbijan for twenty years, and was renowned for his clemency, and for his attention to the duties of his high office; often would he sit in public to hear the complaints of his people, and nothing grieved him so much as to exercise by punishment that authority which was absolutely necessary for the safety of the community.

The people over whom he presided, appeared to be a very quiet industrious race, and apparently quite happy in their mud regions, as I saw them issuing out of the gates morning and evening to their numerous villages, their donkeys generally laden, and themselves bearing a load of napkin bread under their arms. I heard of no crime nor commotion amongst them; they seemed blessed with a sort of negative enjoyment; and of the Persian peasant it may be truly said, "To be content's his natural desire."

I subsequently took more time to examine the grand hall of audience, the walls of which were ornamented with Persian paintings, some of them descriptive of the last war with Turkey, of which his Royal Highness was the leader, and distinguished himself much by his bravery. There were

other pieces, representing the Prince at the chase, of which he was very fond. In one of them he is lancing the wild boar. I have already spoken of the arts in this country, such as I saw at Sulimania, and at the Bagy Seffre, my remarks tending to show that they have no notion of perspective. Their taste for sculpture is no better. A statue of a female was once introduced to the Prince, an exquisite specimen of Sievier's chiselling; but the work had no charms for Abbas Meerza. On being told the cost in England, how his Highness laughed! "I can buy the most exquisite form in flesh and blood for half the money," said he, and he would give her no place in his "harem khanch."

So desirous was the Prince to cultivate friendship with the English nation, that he invited British emigrants to reside in his country, to introduce their arts and industry amongst his own people.*

This invitation was so scantily promulgated that it failed to attract emigrants to Persia, where fifty thousand, in his province alone, might have located amidst the greatest abundance. The soil was prodigal of fruits of the finest kinds; grapes, apricots, peaches, of more than European qualities. Of the

* See Appendix.

former, the "kiss miss," or stoneless grape, is very delicious. There were also melons in great quantities, both the musk and water-melon. Latterly, some vegetables were introduced by the English, such as carrots, potatoes, onions, &c., but these will never come into general use by the Persians, who eat nothing in this way but rice. I should observe that their prejudice against the unclean beast, the hog, is equal to that of the Jews. Scarcely will a Persian servant cook a ham, much less partake of it.

It was remarkable that the Prince, who had never been beyond his own country, and was brought up to the most rigid tenets of his faith, should have been so liberal a Mahomedan. He had no idea of converting people to the Prophet's creed; on the contrary, he had the most contemptuous opinion of those who from interested motives would embrace Islamism. On a parade day the moolahs came forward, congratulating the Prince on their having converted an infidel to the true faith. He enquired what were the man's motives. Was he acquainted with the doctrines which Mahomet taught, and did he adopt them from

conviction? On being answered that he knew nothing of the Koran, the Prince immediately said, "Then he must have had some interested motive in doing so;"—which he heartily despised, and ordered his pay to be reduced twenty tomauns; he being then in the military service. As might have been expected, the renegade renegaded again to his former position.

When Mr. Missionary Wolfe was in Persia, the Prince received him very graciously, and promised him protection and encouragement in building schools, saying very good-humouredly that some of his sons should become his first scholars. He granted him a large plot of ground and the building upon it, to show his sincere desire to serve the Christian cause. He addressed a letter to Mr. Wolfe, of which the following is a copy, as given to me by my good friend, late the Prince's physician:—

"The Rev. Joseph Wolfe having been presented to us, has explained the desire and wish he entertains of establishing in our city of Tabreez, and under the patronage of Henry Drummond, Esq., a school for the education of all classes, and of

sending from England such teachers as may be necessary to reside here, and to employ themselves constantly in the instruction of children. As this benevolent undertaking is in perfect accordance with our feelings, and as the strictest intimacy now exists between the governments of England and Persia, the proposal of Mr. Wolfe has met with our cordial approbation. We have, therefore, ordered that a house should be given, in order to inspire confident assurance that when teachers come from England, the institution shall always receive from us all due patronage, protection, and support."

Subsequently, neither Mr. Wolfe nor his patron did any thing in the way of establishing these schools; which left rather an unfavourable impression on the Prince's mind, since it had the appearance of trifling with him.

The gallantry of the Prince has been conspicuous, in the double sense of the word; it was the cause of his last war with the Turks in 1822. A large and distinguished party of Persians, including the royal harem, were making the pilgrimage to Mecca, and had to pass through Erzroume, where they were suspected of having merchandize with them which was subject to go-

vernment dues.* Remonstrances were of no avail; they were told, "This is the royal harem, if you profane it with a gaze, dire will be the consequences." The Turks persevered in visiting it; and the women were subjected to insults. The gallantry of the Prince being thus impeached, he immediately declared war. An army was assembled of thirty-five thousand men, and his Highness took the field and made rapid marches towards Erzroume. He took possession on the way of Torprach Kaleh, where he defeated four Pashas with nearly sixty thousand men—so says the Persian Gazette. He then advanced to Hassan Kaleh, where he displayed great courage and generalship in conducting the war, which lasted only a short time. The Turks were glad to compromise the affair by a peace, which the Prince liberally granted them. The great superiority of the Persian to the Turkish troops was then very clearly established.

The Prince's family was very numerous. Some of the "shah zadehs" were married during my stay at Tabreez. The marriage fête is generally

* The Persians had frequently imposed on the Turks in this way, by associating merchants in their diplomatic trains, or under other cover of government protection, thereby cheating the "gumrook," or custom dues.

announced by fireworks, rockets, and other missiles being thrown into the air. Of the marriage ceremony I can say nothing, since I was not present at one.

The Prince's predilections in favour of every thing English were particularly fostered by his great regard both for his "hakeem bashi," Dr. Cormick, and for the generalissimo of his troops, Major Hart; to the latter of whom was committed the training of the "serbozes," or infantry, who, by means of English discipline, formed a very respectable corps.*

Abbas Meerza's military genius was latterly exercised against the Khorassanees. He had made

* I would here pause to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of Major Hart. In June, 1830, he was carried off after only a few hours' illness (and within ten minutes of the death of Sir John Macdonald Kennier), of gout in the stomach. His remains lie interred in the Armenian church. Scarcely any Englishman has resided in Persia who has obtained so much the respect and love of the people. His name was quite a passport to the traveller. In his military duties, although a strict disciplinarian, he was much beloved by the Persian soldiers. The Prince's regard for him was unbounded, and he shed tears at his decease, lamenting the loss of his commander-in-chief as the greatest misfortune that could have happened to him. Frank, generous, and brave, he was an ornament to the English character. Trained to arms from the earliest age, he had seen twenty-eight years of uninterrupted service, and more than twenty of it

one or two campaigns in Khorassan, and had assembled a pretty large army at Meshed. During my stay at Tehran, the Prince had come up to solicit supplies from the Shah, for the purpose of marching against Herat, leaving his son, Mahmoud Meerza (the present Shah), commander-in-chief of the troops. He was then in a very enfeebled state of health. Dr. Cormick did his utmost to dissuade him from another campaign, alleging the probable consequences to be totally destructive to him. Jealous of his honour, having pledged himself to return, and ambitious of military renown, the Naib ul Sultanat departed on his military expedition. But he never lived to reach Meshed; being carried off by the climate fever at a village on the road. The following is my report from Tabreez of the melancholy event:—

in Persia. He was looking forward to retire to his native country from the toils of military life, but death suddenly interposed, and both Prince and people were the sincere mourners over his tomb. It was gratifying to see an Englishman so highly respected by a Mahomedan Prince, and by his talent and conduct holding up the honour and dignity of his country. He was equally respected by the Shah; in proof of which, during my stay at Tabreez, he sent him the money to pay the troops in Azerbijan, which he would not entrust to Abbas Meerza, having more confidence in the honour of a British major, than in that of his own son.]

"On the 11th of October, 1833, we received the distressing intelligence of the death of Abbas Meerza, made public by the Ameer y Nizam to the young princes and to the people of the town. The scene was dreadful; the whole town flocked to the Prince's 'maidan' in deep mourning, black tapers burning in their hands, and in the other ashes or straw, strewing on their faces and heads, with true feelings of lament and sorrow.*. The young princes rushed out from the 'deewan khaneh' with their faces and clothes covered with mud and ashes, and mourned with the public, which was really affecting beyond description. The mourning is to be kept up for seven days, and the Shah has ordered it to be general throughout Persia."

Thus died prematurely, at the age of forty-three, Iran's hope, England's friend, and the most accomplished Mahomedan prince to be found in the annals of that country. How many of the actors on the Persian stage have I seen go down to

* How much do the usages of Persia remind me of Biblical customs. Here we see Eliphat, Bildad, and Zophar, the friends of Job, lamenting over his calamities: "They rent every man his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven."

the "tomb of all the Capulets!" The Colonel (Macdonald Kennier), the Major (Hart), the Prince, the Doctor,* and last of all—"the King of Kings."

* Dr. John Cormick had been in Persia for more than twenty years. He held the high appointment of "hakeem bashi," or chief physician, to the Prince, by whom he was much esteemed. It may be said that he was one of the connecting links of the friendship which the Prince entertained for this country. Summoned by his Royal Highness to Tehran, to accompany him to Khorassan, he for a long time resisted the invitation, and much against his will was he at length prevailed on to follow the Prince, some days after him, on that journey. Being ill at the time, he was but little fitted for the undertaking, having suffered from typhus fever some seven or eight days previous to his arrival at the village of Maagamy, twelve stages from Tehran (this was on the 28th of October, 1833). Here his attendants, observing in his countenance a sudden change for the worse, became alarmed, and in a few minutes they found him speechless, and in the last struggle of death. His body was the next day interred somewhere near the village, but it was subsequently brought up to Tabreez, and buried in a garden, called "Marian Nanna." On my last visit I went to his tomb: a plain inscription narrated his name, age, and time of decease. The flowers were growing around it in profusion, and the birds were carolling their requiems over the deceased. His memory is much cherished by all who knew him.

END OF VOL. I.

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